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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk June 25, 2017

Mid edition No 770

BUSINESS

What now for park dream?

Paramount pulls out and little sign of life in much hyped £3.2bn scheme

RAIL

Four in train franchise race

Southeastern to face stiff competition

HOUSING

Major checks for Grenfell cladding

Authorities ensuring all our buildings are safe

HEALTH

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Rail franchise fight may still not deliver the dream

THERE is no more enjoyable discussion for anyone who has ever commuted from Kent into London on our trains than to moan about the level of service.

It has sustained dinner parties for decades. It has created small talk opportunities the like of which are rare and treasured. It has probably started relationships as people find that in train journeys they have a common pain to share and then laugh about.

From being sat in the old slam-door stock with a window that keeps falling open in the icy weather, to peak time services through mainline stations coming into view with just three carriages as it pulls into a station already comfortably boasting three times that amount wanting to get on.

We've all been there.

The point I'm making here is that however hapless you may feel Southeastern has been, it's not like it has followed years of quality service. Connex was so awful it was stripped of its franchise.

This week we learned of the four firms bidding to win it next year. There are some firms in there with a track record of actually doing a good job on other routes, so there could be room for optimism.

However, it is likely to come down to the same old thing. These firms need to make money, and spending countless millions of rolling stock may see them head into the red pretty sharpish. Add to that the fact there are an increasing number of people wanting to use the trains and only so much rail track to go round, it's hard not to fear that other than a spot of branding changes, whoever wins the next franchise deal may find themselves under fire pretty soon too.

But let's stay optimistic. After all, it's often better to travel in hope than to arrive.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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Final four confirmed in race to win rail franchise

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

FUTURE: Who will operate our rail services by the end of next year?

THE government has confirmed this week the four companies in the running to take over the south eastern rail franchise next year.

Currently held by Southeastern, negotiations for the next franchise deal are now under way.

And while Southeastern is among those in contention - under the name London and South East Passenger Rail Services Limited, which is wholly owned subsidiary of Govia Limited - it will face stiff opposition.

Confirmed to also be bidding is South Eastern Holdings Limited, a joint venture company that, should it win the franchise award, will be wholly owned by public transport firm Abellio Transport Group Limited and East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Limited; Stagecoach South Eastern Trains Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of public transport firm Stagecoach Group plc; and Trenitalia UK Limited, wholly owned by Italian railway firm Trenitalia SpA.

Transport secretary Chris Grayling said: "South eastern is one of the busiest franchises in the UK, running almost 2,000 services every weekday. We want passengers to be at the heart of everything that the new operator does, enjoying modern, spacious trains on a more punctual and reliable service.

"We will listen to what passengers say in the current public consultation, and we will seek to make changes and improvements only with their support."

The public consultation is on-going with a decision due next summer and services changing over to the new provider by December.

The government has stated the winner of the south eastern franchise will need to work as one team with Network Rail to ensure passengers experience better journeys and provide longer trains with more space.

Dartford MP Gareth Johnson said: "This decision is hugely important for the economy of the south east. I know as a commuter myself how frustrating the current service can be sometimes, the Department for Transport will have to take a look at what each bid is promising and how they plan to achieve it, and make a decision from there."

Southeastern has held the franchise since 2006 but faced fierce criticism for the level of service it provides.

Hospital's £1m injection to ease repeat of A&E crisis over the winter

DARENT Valley Hospital has been handed almost £1m in cash in a bid to avoid a repeat of last winter where it was almost pushed to breaking point.

Health bosses had to issue a desperate plea for patients to stay away from its A&E department if possible, after experiencing an average of 70 more people a day using its services than the previous year.

In January, a stroke victim was forced to spend the night in a corridor due to staff and bed shortage sat the Dartford hospital.

Now, as part of a £100m A&E streaming package announced in the spring budget, the government has released some £944,291 for Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust to use on winter A&E improvements.

The funding means the hospital will be able to 'stream' patients when they arrive in A&E, with a clinician assessing their needs and deciding where they can receive the most appropriate care.

It will also allow the hospital to build GP practices within its A&E unit, where patients with less urgent needs can receive treatment, further alleviating pressure.

Additionally, the cash supports wider plans set out by NHS England to improve A&E performance by 2018, particularly to get hospitals hitting the target of admitting, transferring or discharging 95 per cent of patients within four hours.

Trust chief executive Susan Acott said: "The extra funding is very welcome and will be used to improve care and streamline the way that all patients are seen in the emergency department.

"The ED waiting area will be redesigned to incorporate two new GP assessment rooms.

"A senior nurse will see patients on arrival to ensure they are seen as quickly as possible by the most appropriate person. This will allow people with more severe injuries or conditions faster access to emergency care."

Lightning strikes bring to an end June's glorious heatwave

SOARING temperatures came to an abrupt halt on Thursday as heavy downpours hits the county - with lightning strikes causing damage to a number of homes.

Emergency crews were called after lightning bolts hit a house in Gravesend, a shed in Sittingbourne and another home in Herne Bay.

The weather also caused problems with power networks, with temporary failures in Ashford, Deal, Faversham, Lenham, Marden and Minister amongst others. There were no reports of any injuries.

It brought to an end a week of record-breaking temperatures across the country.

The weather over the coming week will see temperatures in the early 20s and some rain forecast midweek.

Warning over closures at the Dartford Crossing this week

MOTORISTS using the Dartford Crossing are being warned of overnight closures next week.

Ongoing works to maintain safety will see closures from 9pm to 5.30am from Monday.

The closures take place every night in the west tunnel except on Friday and Saturday, when the east tunnel will be shut to northbound traffic.

During the east tunnel closures, a diversion for oversized vehicles will be in place.

For motorists crossing from Essex into Kent, the QEII Bridge will be closed from 10pm to 5.30am on Saturday, July 1.

Traffic will be diverted through the east tunnel. The northbound entry slip at junction 1a for Swanscombe will also be closed for four nights from Monday .

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Blood scandal petition handed in at Number 10

CAMPAIGNERS demanding justice for the thousands of victims of the contaminated blood scandal handed a petition in at Number 10 this week, calling for a ''full and final settlement'' from the government.

Many sufferers were haemophiliacs using blood sourced from prisons in the US during the 1970s and 1980s. They were infected with hepatitis C or HIV.

Among the victims is Broadstairs' Steve Dymond, 61, who contracted heptatis C. He said: ''The symbolism of handing in this petition to demand an inquiry on Midsummer's Day, the day with the most daylight, gives hope that the depth and scope of this scandal can be brought out from its murky shadows and examined in the clear light of day.''

Bulldozers to finally clear Thamesteel site as focus now turns to the future

By Chris Britcher
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DEMOLITION work on the final buildings at the old Thamesteel site on Sheppey have got under way, ahead of the building on a logistics centre and the creation of 200 jobs.

Thamesteel closed in 2013 and with it saw the loss of some 350 skilled jobs - blowing a major hole in the local economy.

But owner of the site, Peel Ports, say the Sheerness site will now be tranformed as part of a £50 million investment in the area.

The levelling of a 32-metre-high building which housed the former melt shop is now under way and is expected to be completed by next month.

In its place will be logistics facilities for the handling, storage and distribution of the likes of steel, wood and vehicles being shipped in and out of the port.

As part of this will be the construction of a 230-metre long bridge across Brielle Way connecting the site - now known as Wellmarsh - to the Sheerness Port.

PLANS: Port of Sheerness

Costing £3m, work will begin in July and Peel Ports are asking for the public to help them name it.

Paul Barker, port director, said: "Activity to regenerate the land at the former Thamesteel site has been under way for several months and we are about to embark on the final piece of demolition activity.

"This will pave the way for the start of construction work at Wellmarsh. Not only will this allow us to breathe new life into a site which has lain derelict for four years, it will also allow us to reconfirm our commitment to the future of the region – creating new jobs and investment opportunities.

"We are continually liaising with local residents and businesses as part of our master plan for growth, to ensure we create a positive impact on the local area.

"We now look forward to turning our plans for Wellmarsh into a reality and seeing the transformation of Sheerness as a leading deep-water gateway into Europe over the next few years."

The master plan includes proposals to reclaim up to 183 acres of land for expansion, developments and a new marina over the next 20 years.

SHOW: Big Day Out is on July 1

Anger as ticket offer slashes 70% off price

A MUM-of-two who spent more than £70 on tickets to the Big Day Out festival in Maidstone next month has been left fuming after the same tickets were put up for sale on discount website Groupon for just £20.

Hannah Mitchell, from Rochester, had snapped up a family ticket with two children, plus an infant ticket for the event at Mote Park on July 1.

She had paid a total of £71.20 and is now angry the same ticket is available on Groupon for just £20 - more than 70 per cent off what she paid.

Mrs Mitchell, who works in events, told us: "It is just not on. I know how these things work and now I am going to go in to the festival already angry."

The one-day festival is set to feature family-friendly stars such as Atomic Kitten, Diversity and Louisa Johnson.

Added Mrs Mitchell: "I know they have done nothing wrong, but I am just left with the feeling I have been ripped off."

A spokesman for Big Day Out told us: "We allocated Groupon with 100 discount tickets due to the fact they have a database of around three million people.

"We were looking to use this database to expose the event to families further afield. This was a very minimal amount of tickets, which have now sold out."

Drunk who smashed up Whitstable is jailed

A THUG who smashed up property as he walked through Whitstable town centre with a spade has been jailed for 16 months.

Anson Simms, 36, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to six counts of criminal damage at Canterbury Crown Court on Tuesday and was sentenced the same day.

The court was told how on May 22 at around 7pm Simms deliberately walked along the High Street, Cromwell Road and Oxford Street armed with a spade smashing windows and damaging property in full view of the public.

Simms, who was drunk, was shouting profanities whilst causing thousands of pounds worth of damage to vehicles and buildings.

Detective constable Ruth Goddard, said: ''This was a terrifying ordeal for the community and has caused significant damage and costs to business owners. He appeared to have some sort of vendetta against the unsuspecting community and we are pleased he is now behind bars.''

Medical centre plans go on show in July

CONTROVERSIAL plans for a new medical centre in Tonbridge town centre go on public display next month.

If approved, the facility will be built on the site of the former Teen and Twenty club in River Lawn Road, which has served the community for more than 50 years.

Campaigners argue the future of clubs that operated in the centre before it closed in March have been ''jeopardised'' and accused ''greedy councillors'' at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council of ''wanting to make a few quid selling the site''.

The council insists it will be supporting groups using the building to find alternative facilities and that a medical centre is crucial for the area - a motive supported by local MP Tom Tugendhat.

Assuming that all the relevant permissions are in place, building will start in spring 2018 with completion expected to be in spring 2019.

The plans will be exhibited at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge on Wednesday, July 5 from 4-8pm.

Your water may start to change colour

WATER may start turning a funny colour in Tunbridge Wells over the next few weeks as work begins on Monday to clean water mains in the town.

South East Water will carry out the programme from Monday as part of ongoing maintenance on the company's underground mains.

The process, known as flushing, involves directing water through the pipes quickly to draw sediment deposits – such as iron and manganese – out of the network.

This is to remove naturally-occurring, harmless deposits which build up over time.

While these naturally-occurring deposits are not harmful, they can cause temporary discoloured water.

South East Water's Ann Seach said: ''During the flushing process customers may notice a reduction in water pressure, and possibly some discolouration, but this is temporary and can be solved by running the kitchen tap until the water runs clear.''

Work is expected to last three weeks.

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Lydd sees start of major £7.8m helicopter rescue operation

By Tom Pyman
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CONSTRUCTION of the new HM Coastguard search and rescue (SAR) helicopter base for the south east has begun at Lydd Airport.

The £7.8m project will create a new focal point for the region's SAR service and significantly upgrade the facilities used by its crews.

Construction is expected to be completed by early February 2018.

Lydd is the final new-build base to be constructed for the UK SAR helicopter service which Bristow Helicopters began operating in April 2015 on behalf of HM Coastguard.

SAR operations have been conducted at a temporary base at Lydd Airport since August 2015.

There are 10 coastguard bases distributed strategically around the UK, providing vital life-saving support on and offshore - to the fishing and other marine industries, as well as to land-based incidents including mountain rescue, missing persons and other medical emergencies.

Each base is staffed by a group of dedicated pilots and specialist winchman paramedics, winch operators, engineers, and support staff, many of whom transferred to the new Coastguard SAR service from the former military operation.

BEGINS: Work is under way on final part of nationwide coastguard rescue jigsaw

Neil Robertson, chief pilot of Lydd SAR, said: "Lydd is a key location for UK SAR in the south-east of England, providing support across the English Channel, Kent, East and West Sussex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Surrey, Greater London and Essex.

"Our team's focus is always on bringing people home safely from a search and rescue operation.

"These new facilities will ensure that during year-round training, and day-to-day operations we are able to live up to the incredibly high standards of the UK SAR service."

Neil Ebberson, UK SAR project manager, said: "Nationwide, the UK SAR service has handled more than 3,500 search and rescue missions since April 1, 2015.

"The Lydd base will, like its sister sites across the UK, feature the very best facilities, to ensure our people are able to work and rest in comfort, with all of the support services they need on-hand, when they need them."

Cops probe gang rape at naturist club

POLICE are investigating reports a woman was gang raped at a naturist club in Fawkham last weekend.

The woman is believed to have been followed to a caravan she was staying in by five men and assaulted at around 2.30am at the Eureka Sun Club in Manor Lane near Longfield, last Saturday.

Police are keen to speak to anyone with any information by calling 01622 604100.

Bees killed as hives torched in village

DOZENS of bees have been killed after 26 hives were burnt out in what police are describing as a "suspicious" fire in Sellindge, near Ashford.

The incident took place between 3pm last Sunday and 7pm on the Monday. Police believe it may be linked to the theft of two beehives from another farm in Sellindge the previous week.

Body 'not suspicious'

POLICE say they are not treating as suspicious a man's body found in a public garden in Gravesend on Thursday.

Believed to be in his 40s and from the town, he was found near Royal Pier Road, close to St Andrew's Gardens.

His family have been informed of his death. He had not been named at time of going to press.

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Theatre demolition complete as development picks up pace

THE demolition of an historic theatre in Southborough has been completed as work on a controversial community hub gathers pace.

Council chiefs in Tubnridge Wells have confirmed Royal Victoria Hall Theatre - dubbed "a cultural focal point" by campaigners opposed to the development - has now been brought down. as well as the former town council offices on the site in London Road.

In its place will be a community hub containing its own new hall and theatre space, a library, cafe, retail units, medical centre, sports pavilion, offices and up to 69 homes.

A theatre consultant is advising on specialist elements, and the Assembly Hall Theatre team at Tunbridge Wells is keen to take on the running of the new facility for a trial period of two years, working with Southborough Town Council to assess demand and sustainability.

This will be the subject of a report to the cabinet at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in September, when a final decision will be made.

Meanwhile, the Tesco site and the rear of the Lloyds Bank land have been purchased by Kent County Council, with the bank building purchased by JVIP Ltd.

No direct Eurostar for us to Amsterdam just yet

EUROSTAR's much-anticipated direct service from London to Amsterdam is not set to stop at Kent stations - for the time being at least - council chiefs confirmed this week.

The cross-Channel operator announced last month it was in the final stages of planning for the service to the Netherlands, with a plan to operate trains on the route by the end of the year.

Kent County Council chiefs said they didn't expect the service to launch until Easter and confirmed Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International were not on the current route plan, as they are on some services to the continent.

However, KCC's principal transport planner for rail, Stephen Gasche, said chiefs would push for expansion of the service to Ashford in the future.

Signalling at the Kent station needs to be upgraded to allow Eurostar's newest trains to pass through and Mr Gasche insisted that project, known as Ashford Spurs, was "on time and on budget", and due to be completed in the spring.

He added: "The Amsterdam service was always, from the beginning, going to be a service that would be non-stop from London to Brussels - it's not even stopping at Lille, we knew there wasn't going to be a Kent stop.

"From Easter 2018, there will be two trains a day: London-Brussels-Rotterdam-Amsterdam.

"There are complex border and immigration issues for the return journeys which Eurostar is seeking to resolve with the authorities."

Restaurant evacuated

DINERS at the Tacos Locos restaurant in Canterbury's St Peter's Street had to be evacuated on Monday afternoon after a fire broke out in premises above.

Four fire engines attended the scene and crews tackled a fire in the wall cavity on the first floor of the three-storey premises.

Star films at the seaside

ACTING legend Sir Michael Caine was spotted filming in Margate this week.

He is believed to be playing Dartford's Brian Reader in a movie about the daring Hatton Garden heist. He was seen in a number of locations, including the beach and close to the Turner Contemporary.

Local plan gets the nod

SWALE Borough Council's local plan - which charts future development until 2031 - has been approved by government inspectors.

Gerry Lewin, deputy leader of the council, said: ''By having an adopted plan we are now in a much stronger position to fight off speculative planning applications.''

Bookies admit to statue

BOOKMAKER Paddy Power has claimed responsibility for erecting a 110-ft structure of the prime minister making a rude gesture towards the rest of Europe which appeared on the White Cliffs of Dover earlier this month to help promote its odds on political negotiations.

Lorry parking laws tighten

By Tom Pyman
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FRESH laws to combat illegal lorry parking on residential roads and lay-bys across Kent are set to be introduced by the government.

Kent County Council chiefs revealed the proposals at a transport cabinet committee meeting at County Hall, where the authority was outlining its wider plans for freight transport across the county.

Cabinet member for transport Matthew Balfour said a trial system would be introduced over the coming months, and that a proper plan was needed to restrict the so-called fly-parking, and provide facilities where trucks could park safely and conveniently.

He told members: "The Department for Transport have been very positive about it and various changes to the law are going to be made so we can better deal with fly-parking.

"We are also going to be running a test project in the county later in the year to make sure we've got this as right as we can - we're working with one district who are being exceptionally helpful in that.

"If you're going to restrict lorries from parking where they do at the moment, they need somewhere where they can go and we've got a little list of sites which we think are appropriate."

BLIGHT: It is hoped it will ease a number of problems experienced across the county

Cllr Balfour said he would not reveal where those sites were located at this stage.

Police officers and Highways England officials moved on, fined or immobilised a total of 3,703 lorries in Kent last year, and MPs have long lobbied Theresa May over the problem of fly-parking which has been described as "a blight", "anti-social" and "dangerous".

The prime minister told Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately last year the government was working on a solution and now appears to have come good on her promise.

"The government shares the desire to ensure that we don't see this fly-parking of lorries across Kent, that we do provide suitable lorry parking facilities in Kent," she said in December.

"I know the roads minister is looking at this issue very carefully indeed, I recognise it from my time as the home secretary, the pressure at particular times that can be put on the roads, villages and towns in Kent in relation to this."

Family agony at cyclist death

THE daughter of a pensioner who died while out riding his bicycle has paid a moving tribute to her "beloved daddy".

Kenneth Legge, 78, from Bromley, fell following an incident with a group of other cyclists in Pilgrims Way, Kemsing, near Sevenoaks. He was airlifted to a hospital, where he later died.

His daughter Alex Legge said: "After a tragic accident while riding his bike, my beloved daddy left us in the early hours of Thursday. Shocked and heartbroken right now. RIP my dad, my world, my hero."

Bows swiped from Scouts

SIXTY archery bows have been stolen from a shed belong on the Scouts.

Crooks swiped the bows after the break-in in Broom Lane in Langton Green, near Tunbridge Wells.

Police are now appealing for help in tracking down those responsible.

Anyone with information can call Kent Police on 01622 604100 quoting crime reference YY/016084/17.

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Pressure grows on Westminster to fund new Canterbury hospital

Following a string of controversial moves, an MP is lobbying for steps to be taken to resolve the issues at the Kent & Canterbury by funding the creation of a new state-of-art hospital and medical school

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE fight to keep key emergency services at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital played out in the House of Commons this week with one Kent MP calling on the government to help fund a brand new hospital to resolve the crisis.

In one of the first debates in the new government, Faversham and Mid Kent Conservative MP Helen Whately spoke of concerns over the way the city hospital is being run following a string of controversial decisions.

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust has been widely criticised in recent weeks after announcing stroke patients will temporarily be diverted to other hospitals in Ashford and Margate.

It followed the trust's decision to move more than half of the junior doctors at the Canterbury site to the William Harvey and QEQM, due to a lack of permanent consultant doctors who oversee and support their training.

Additionally, it announced hundreds of patients attending the K&C's urgent care centre by ambulance would instead be taken to the emergency departments at the other east Kent hospitals.

Campaigners, who held a huge march through the city earlier this month in protest, fear lives are being put at risk by the moves.

Speaking in the Commons, Mrs Whately said: "The building is out of date — frankly, it is crumbling — and the hospital is struggling to recruit staff.

"On Monday, junior doctors were withdrawn from Canterbury and relocated to neighbouring hospitals, after Health Education England (HEE) said that there were not enough consultants to oversee their training and there was too much reliance on locums.

"The shift of junior doctors means the shift of emergency care. Heart attack patients in my constituency, who previously faced a journey of under 20 minutes to get to the hospital in Canterbury from Faversham, will now have to travel to Ashford — a longer drive on winding roads, one of which will be closed all summer — or Margate, 40 minutes away.

"In rush hour or by public transport, these journeys are far, far longer. People are scared that they or a loved one will not make it in time, and that visiting will be harder, or impossible for some.

"Added to that is the confusion about the transfer of services, and the risk that the pressure to free up acute beds will mean patients being transferred between hospitals before they are ready or ending up in corridors. Nurses, some of whom are here today, are desperately worried about the risk for patients.

"No commitment has been made on when acute services will return to Canterbury. There is great scepticism about the efforts being made to recruit consultants. Public trust has been lost. The point is that these temporary changes must not become permanent. We must not allow the hospital to crumble further and drift towards a downgrade, when there is a real opportunity to seize this moment of change to form an ambitious long-term vision for healthcare in Kent.

"As a university city and a major population centre with good transport links, Canterbury is the right place for a major hospital and a medical school.

"I have been told many times that one barrier to the idea of a new Canterbury hospital is a lack of capital. I ask my honourable friend [secretary of state for health] to help us here. More capital has been promised for the NHS, so will he make it clear to the local NHS leaders driving the process that if they, and we in Kent, can make the case, capital will be available? There is a risk that the consultation on Kent's STP [sustainability and transformation plan] will be presented to the public with no option for an acute hospital at Canterbury. If none of the options propose keeping acute services at Canterbury, it cannot be called a true consultation."

She said she was supported in the call by Canterbury's new Labour MP Rosie Duffield, while Dover MP Charlie Elphicke also spoke out in support of the future plans.

In response, Philip Dunne, minister for the Department of Health, said: "My honourable friend rightly raised concerns that this might presage a future closure of the site, and I want to try to reassure her; the trust board has been left in no doubt whatsoever that it should not regard this as a step on the road to a permanent solution and that it needs to consider the requirements of the population of mid-Kent in the round when looking at the provision for the future to be undertaken through the STP.

"The recruitment and retention of key medical staff has been an ongoing challenge for the trust, and there is a shortage of consultants to provide the required training and supervision of junior doctors posted to Kent & Canterbury Hospital.

"On Sunday, June 18, 38 junior doctors were reallocated from Kent & Canterbury to other sites operated by the trust. The removal of these junior doctors has required the trust to relocate some of the services it provides, to ensure safe and sustainably staffed services for patients.

"My honourable friend's constituents will still receive good service provision. The clinical commissioning group has facilitated this development by acquiring some 40 additional care packages to support effective discharge from the Ashford and Margate sites, to free up some 75 beds to allow for this temporary service change to take place, along with an additional 20 ambulances to cover the additional journey times from the Canterbury area. Replacement services at nearby hospitals in Ashford and Margate are being monitored to ensure that they are safe and effective, given the additional pressure on those hospitals from the move.

"Unfortunately, I cannot say now how long this temporary closure will last. The GMC has made it clear that 'if there is evidence that appropriate and sustainable action has been taken to make the urgent care centre a safe environment for doctors in training once more, HEE will review reallocating trainees to the site'.

"No decision has been made about the long-term future of the service and no decision will be made without full public consultation. I can give that reassurance."

As for freeing up money from central coffers to potentially fund a new hospital Mr Dunne added: "Capital is allocated by the Department of Health on the basis of the strength of the proposals, which need to meet the criteria on meeting the needs of local populations. That has to be balanced against the amount of capital that is available throughout the country, where there are competing needs.

"As for the medical school, the consultation the department ran on allocating new medical school places has completed and we are considering our response. We wish to encourage some development of new medical schools, but again, that is subject to regulatory approval by the General Medical Council and other bodies. Any universities that wish to establish a new school need to meet the regulators' criteria."

PUSH: Helen Whately MP wants to see steps to ease the growing fears

Ken Rogers, chairman for campaigners Concern for Health in East Kent (Chek) and who attended the debate in Westminster, said he was convinced the moves were motivated by saving money and not patient care.

He said: "We believe these so-called temporary moves will actually become permanent. If that's the case, then we firmly believe it is the first step in a path that will eventually see us completely lose the K&C as a hospital.

"We have to challenge the trust on staffing and future plans but still have no answers to allay any of our fears."

Will brakes be slammed on a blanket 20mph limit in Medway?

Councillors are examining a host of options to make roads safer and one could see a big drop in limits

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A PROPOSAL to introduce a blanket 20mph zone across towns and villages in Medway has been dismissed as "ridiculous" by campaigners.

Medway Council's regeneration, culture and environment overview and scrutiny committee met last week to discuss the possibility of a district-wide speed limit on residential streets, like those that have been rolled out in some local authority areas.

A petition was handed to the town hall in 2015 requesting a 20mph limit in the Darland area of the Watling ward, and council chiefs were asked to discuss the possible implementation of a pilot scheme and a wider blanket system.

Some 2,000 blanket schemes are in operation or planned in England, including a number of London boroughs, but council chiefs admit in most cases it is too early to draw firm conclusions as to their effectiveness in reducing vehicle speeds, improving road safety and promoting a shift towards walking and cycling.

There has been some roll out of 20mph zones in other parts of the county, with one in Tunbridge Wells recently going live, while in 2010, Maidstone Borough Council agreed to run a trial of low cost speed management schemes outside a number of primary schools.

Speeds outside the schools were surveyed prior to implementation, and then after three and nine months to test success.

After three months, the initial results were in line with government advice that 20mph limits without traffic calming generally reduce mean speeds by about 1mph, but after nine months, any benefits had mostly disappeared and, perversely in most locations, overall speeds had actually increased.

There are currently eight 20mph zones within Medway: White Road Estate in Chatham, Higham Road in Wainscott, Kings Street and Doust Way in Rochester, Lower Rainham Road in Rainham and Christmas Street, Meresborough Road and part of Grange Road in Gillingham, but to introduce a blanket zone across the entire district would be a huge step.

The council says exact costs of implementing such a scheme are unknown, however, estimates based on previous experience indicate that it will exceed £750,000 for which the authority would need to identify funding, having not allocated any cash for the proposal in its budget.

This does also not take account of engineering - for example, speed humps, which may be required as part of the project.

Roger Lawson is the Kent spokesperson for the Alliance for British Drivers campaign group, which has led much of the opposition to similar proposals elsewhere, including an ongoing row in Croydon.

He told KoS: "We are opposed to them because they are a waste of money, and sometimes in these schemes, particularly where there are 20mph signs only [rather than other measures] the accident figures get worse.

"Part of the reason is people anticipate the traffic is going to be much slower, so they step into the road without thinking and get hit – even if they may be doing less than 20mph, you do seem to get more pedestrian collisions.

"Plus, in general, people don't adhere to the limit where the road is inappropriate.

"People who push for these schemes have no understanding of road safety, and suggest them on 'gesture politics' grounds.

"Introducing it across all of Medway makes it more ridiculous – there are a lot of 30mph roads which should stay at 30mph.

"London boroughs get some funding from Transport for London so for this scheme Medway have got to get it from the taxpayer, and why would they want to pay for this? It's pointless."

Other concerns raised in a report discussed by the committee include the suggestion that a blanket 20mph speed limit imposed on main roads removes the incentive to stay on faster moving routes and so drivers instead divert through neighbourhoods.

This could contribute to quieter streets being used as 'ratruns' which in turn may require physical traffic calming measures, such as speed humps - the cost of which may rule out any kind of pilot, council chiefs added.

The committee said the council had four options at this initial stage of researching how best to proceed with the proposal.

The first of which is to do nothing - of which the advantages are that there will be no capital or revenue cost implications to the council, and that current journeys throughout the authority will likely remain unaltered.

Option two is to implement a blanket 20mph speed restriction on residential roads that is either not enforced through traffic calming, or that has traffic calming in some areas.

The main advantage of a blanket zone without any traffic calming is cost, although even without any engineering interventions, council chiefs are worried about the proposed £750,000 bill.

Such zones that are not self-enforcing, with no traffic calming measures, may result in people ignoring the speed limits and may result in little accident reduction benefit, they added, also warning that journey times across Medway may increase as speed is restricted on a large scale.

SLOW: Opinion is still divided as to whether such measures really do make our roads safer

If traffic calming was included in all or part of the blanket zone, although it may have more of an effect on slowing traffic, the cost would rise extensively, perhaps making it unattainable at a time where budgets are being squeezed like never before.

A third option suggests using the existing 20mph zones within Medway to monitor the effectiveness of a zone-based 20mph speed restriction on a residential estate at a local level.

By establishing a baseline for speed and casualty data in the existing zones, the council says it can review effectiveness over a 12-18 month period, and bosses add that it will also not have to spend additional cash to implement a new pilot zone.

The final option is to simply monitor the success of existing blanket 20mph speed restrictions on residential roads in other authorities and compare commonalities.

Furthermore, there is an expectation the Department for Transport will publish research into their effectiveness in due course, which will prevent unnecessary costs.

The committee agreed to monitor the current zones in operation elsewhere in the country, and review figures in the eight existing Medway schemes, but will not recommend implementation to cabinet.

Conservative councillor for Rainham North, David Carr, told KoS he couldn't forsee a district-wide rollout any time soon.

"We are here to try and do what the public want, but as soon as you suggest putting in humps, most of the population will say they don't want it," he said.

"On the other hand, they don't want a 20mph zone either because they ignore it anyway."

Kent's Green Party has long called for 20mph zones across all residential areas in the county.

A spokesman said: "Research from around the country, has shown an overwhelming support for a lower speed limit on residential streets. We recognise that a 20mph limit is not a panacea for our roads, there is far more work to do to make them safer and greener, but 20mph sends a strong message to slow down. If it helps take 5mph off the average speed, then it will have undoubtably have made our roads safer."

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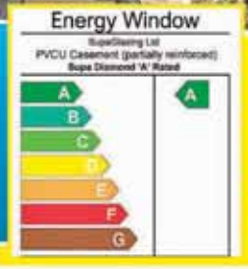

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KOS/15

Paramount pulls the plug on licensing deal with park

Bosses behind the £3.2bn project insist it will have no impact on their plans going forward, but the loss of such an iconic brand it has traded on for some many years, once again casts a cloud of doubt as to if it will ever become a reality

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

DEVELOPERS behind the £3.2 billion entertainment resort on the Swanscombe Peninsula have dramatically split with movie studio Paramount - but insist it is still on track to open in 2022.

Bosses at London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) had traded heavily on its deal with Paramount Licensing Inc to not only lend considerable star power to the park, but to give it significant credibility.

The deal had meant the park could have used big movie franchises to brand rides and parts of the park based on blockbusters such as Star Trek, Titanic and Transformers.

However, bosses behind the park insist they will now be able to strike deals with other major entertainment brands who had previously not entered negotiations because of the tie-up with Paramount.

Humphrey Percy, CEO of LRCH, said: "We want to express our sincere thanks to the many members of the Paramount team who have worked with us since we took over the project in August 2013.

"This announcement does not have an effect on the timing of our planned development consent order submission in November 2017.

"We are working closely with the local authorities, landowners and local community, as well as our other stakeholders, and we very much look forward to showing our plans to the public as part of our final stage of consultation prior to submitting later this year.

"We are creating a unique entertainment destination offering a scale and quality unprecedented in the UK where much loved characters and stories will be brought to life from iconic movies, television, books, electronic gaming and toys."

There is no financial loss to the project because of the deal's collapse - the park paid for the rights to use the Paramount name. However, it is undoubtedly a blow to its reputation amid mounting concerns it will never see the light of day.

The project, which relies heavily on raising significant private funding, was originally due to open in 2019. That has subsequently been moved back three years.

However, just earlier this month a deal in principle was struck with the InterContinental Hotels Group to operate up to 4,000 guest rooms on the complex, which is expected to create 33,000 jobs.

Dartford MP Gareth Johnson said: "LRCH have informed me of this change in approach - they clearly feel it will give them greater flexibility over who they work with on this project and the themes they will be able to offer.

"The main thing for me is not how the park is themed but how the local area will be able to cope with a large development of this nature.

"The jobs it would bring are very welcome but it has to be approached in the right way.

"I am due to meet with the project team shortly to discuss all the key issues."

Paul Spooner, interim chief executive of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, added:

AMBITIOUS: Chiefs insist it now means they can speak to other major entertainment brands who were previously deterred due to the tie up with the Hollywood studio

"Over the last year we have worked closely with London Resort Company Holdings on its plans for a major theme park at Swanscombe Peninsula and we will continue to keep a close eye on developments.

"Plans for a major theme park have enormous potential benefits for the area and the significant momentum that has started in Ebbsfleet Garden City in the last 12 months will continue as 5,100 homes are built here by 2020/21."

Meanwhile, landowners and businesses on the proposed site say they are growing frustrated by the lack of "serious negotiations" with bosses behind the project.

Continued on page 16

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Continued from page 15

While welcoming the "impetus" LRCH have demonstrated in recent months, firms based on the Northfleet Industrial Estates, collectively known as Peninsula Management Group (PMG), say they are concerned that talks with them have stalled and insist negotiations need to accelerate as a matter of urgency.

Spokesperson Dan Bramwell said: "The three industrial estates are the most strategically important landholdings required for the theme park as they cover the proposed access route, control room and guest service facilities components.

"It is also obvious that LRCH has had to scale back its plans since the original plans were launched so we await the public consultation with interest.

"Whereas it is good to see progress being made as this helps to eliminate uncertainty, it is very frustrating that serious negotiations over relocation and compensation for the businesses and landowners has yet to start in earnest.

"There have been several promises from LRCH's agents but these have not been backed-up with action which is what the PMG parties want to see.

"The timescales quoted are extremely tight and in reality are totally unrealistic unless LRCH are intent on using compulsory purchase order powers to force out the businesses."

It is suggested from the latest plans on the London Resort website that the theme park access will take out the western element of the estates and the control centre and guest service facilities the eastern section.

Mr Bramwell added: "The businesses located on the western part of the estates are probably the hardest to relocate as they are the larger non-environmentally friendly operations that require land plots rather than just units and essential environmental permits.

"The owners, along with PMG, have been monitoring site availability and there is very little in close proximity readily available.

"We will be looking to work closely with LRCH, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, both local and the county councils, and other parties to ensure that if the DCO application is approved, the businesses can proceed to operate with confidence moving forward.

"In a nutshell, we have reached the crunch time and are hoping that LRCH will start to move things forward speedily."

LRCH spokesperson Andy Martin told us in response: "It depends how you define 'serious negotiations' but we don't think that's the case [that talks have not begun].

"We met with them last week, we do so regularly, and talks are ongoing because they are an important local audience to us."

Further announcements on the resort's progress are expected to be made over the coming weeks.

IS IT THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?

THE team behind the London Resort project certainly do not lack ambition.

The park is designed to be similiar in scale and spectacle to Disneyland Paris - in short creating a sprawling, world-class entertainment destination offering a host of different attractions and facilities.

Pulling in a hoped for audience of 50,000 visitors a day, it is being touted as a world class venue which will pull in crowds from across the globe - in particular exploiting the high-speed rail link at Ebbsfleet to attract crowds from mainland Europe.

But its proximity to London - and the pointed use of the capital's name in all descriptions of the park - is designed to ensure visitors to the city look to spend time there too, thus tapping into a major existing tourism hub.

The most headline grabbing aspect is its theme park featuring all the latest rides and technology and will have to deliver in a major way to attract the sort of crowds it will need to sustain the investment. Estimates suggest there will be some 50 rides on offer.

It promises day and night shows and parades in a Disney-esque manner.

In addition, there will be thousands upon thousands of hotel rooms to house visitors to the 800 acre site to the east of Lovers Lane, between the A226 and River Thames.

But that is just one component.

Those hotels will also be used to house those coming to use the conference and exhibition facilities the site promises too.

While the detail has not been confirmed, the suggestion is a rival to the likes of the Excel in London and even the O2 Arena when it comes to putting on live music shows and major productions.

There will be cinemas and nightclubs too, thus creating a complete entertainment facility.

Businesses will also be encouraged to relocate to industrial areas within the complex, while there will be acres of food and drink outlets to satisfy hunger and thirsts of all those flocking.

With some 30,000 jobs created as a result of the construction and then running of the site, it all sounds extremely positive. Yet so far the fact no turf has yet been dug towards it allows a creeping fear it could yet all prove to be too good to be true.

The huge financial demands on constructing the site on the former cement works is considerable - especially in such a sensitive market.

There is little doubt if it can get that money it would prove to be an almighty addition to the county's offering and transform that part of north Kent. It has already spoken of wanting to exploit the opportunity of arriving by boat - allowing a more leisurely route to the destination and thus arriving via the Thames from central London - and providing new access roads.

It will also plug into the major development at the Ebbsfleet Garden City proposal for thousands of new homes.

Due to the size and complexity of the project it became the first business or commercial project to be accepted as what is known as a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP). Considered to be of such national importance, the decision over planning will be made directly by the government and the secretary of state.

It means while it is working closely with both Dartford and Gravesham councils - the project falls within the boundaries of both - our local authorities will not be making the final decision although their views will be part of the submission.

To ensure success, the process is complex and the team behind the project have always stressed they want to ensure all boxes are ticked before any formal submission.

That should, however, finally be made in November following a host of public consultation events over recent years.

If it gets the go-ahead, and don't expect the decision to be made overnight, and all the required funding is in place - the team behind it have financed it only up to the point of planning submission - then work could begin in 2019 with a completion date of 2022.

Believe it when you see it? Well, quite. But let's keep our fingers crossed because the economic benefits for the county could be simply enormous.

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INFERNO: The smouldering remains of the Grenfell Tower in Kensington and, below, fire crews read the tributes left for the 79 thought to have died in the tragedy. Pictures: PA WIRE

Hundreds of buildings across the county checked over fire safety

The Grenfell tragedy has sent out shockwaves for a variety of reasons - now local authorities here in Kent are checking to ensuring none of the cladding blamed for the blaze spreading is present here

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

BUILDINGS across the county are being checked to ensure any cladding meets all fire safety requirements, in the light of the catastrosphe in Kensington which saw so many people killed during the Grenfell Tower inferno.

As fire investigators seek to establish just what went wrong after the fire, it emerged on Friday that cladding and insulation encasing the building did not pass any fire-safety tests, increasing concern the 24-storey block's facade accelerated the blaze's spread

The latest figures suggest 79 people lost their lives in the fire.

Now precautionary checks are being conducted across Kent and Medway to ensure all buildings meet the safety requirements demanded.

There is no suggestion that any buildings are at risk, and the checks will be extensive, covering everything from blocks of flats to schools and other public buildings.

Kent County Council said it is carrying out precautionary checks on more than 400 buildings using a two-fold process.

The first is to identify all the buildings which have any sort of cladding, which is in itself far from unusual.

Secondly, to examine each of them individually to see what kind of cladding it is.

It estimates this will take another week to complete.

A spokesman said: "However, at the moment we have no reason to believe that any of the buildings have the kind of cladding use at Grenfell Tower."

He added: "KCC does hold the freehold of the two tower blocks close to the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone. These both have cladding, but they have already been checked and it is definitely not of the type used at Grenfell."

At Medway Council, a council spokesman said: "The safety of our staff and residents is a key priority, and therefore we routinely assess the fire risk of our buildings. We have recently begun a full fire risk assessment of Gun Wharf, Medway Council HQ, and all other operating council buildings will follow this as a part of a rolling review programme."

Thanet District Council said it is working very closely with the fire service.

A spokesman said: "All of our social housing accommodation, including our tower blocks, is managed by East Kent Housing. Each property has an up-to-date fire risk assessment in place and any works agreed with the fire service are completed.

"A number of blocks in Thanet have been over clad and we are reviewing the work that has been undertaken. We can confirm that this work did not use the same rain-screen type of system that was used at Grenfell Tower.

"A full review of cladding materials, where these are in place, will be carried out by East Kent Housing.

"We are obviously very keen to reassure residents at what must be a worrying time for them. The team at East Kent Housing has visited residents within these properties to reassure them that the systems used were different and to restate safety advice. The safety advice given will reflect national guidance and has been agreed on a block by block basis with the fire service."

Gravesham Borough Council's cabinet member for housing, Anthony Pritchard, added: "Here in Gravesham we carry out regular reviews of the fire safety arrangements in place at our residential housing blocks and we would like to reassure our residents that their safety is one of our top priorities. All of the checks we undertake meet our regulatory and legislative requirements.

"We have carried out a number of upgrading initiatives in recent months including installing fire sprinkler systems, continuing fire risk assessments and upgrading smoke detection monitors to some of our residential blocks.

"We have run all of the completed safety checks past our independent fire risk assessor and the council has been described by the assessor as being 'the leading authority in Kent' with regard to the fitting of automatic fire sprinkler systems to higher risk buildings. This independent feedback is very pleasing and we will continue this work to ensure the safety of all of our residents."

Mark Harris is director of finance at the Kent Catholic Partnership, a private company that runs schools across Kent, including Maidstone, Canterbury, Tunbridge Wells, Margate, and Whitstable.

He told us: "As schools joined our multi-academy trust, we have some very detailed surveys done on every school and are satisfied we have no

such cladding in any of our schools or anything of a highly combustible nature.

"We have spent over £2 million across our school in the past two years updating fire safety systems like alarms and lighting.

"One can never be complacent, but we are assured as we can be."

In Maidstone Borough Council, John Littlemore, head of housing and community services, said: "From the information disclosed to the council to date we are not aware that the tower blocks in our area, that comprise of accommodation above six floors, have a similar cladding to that used at Grenfell Tower.

"The council is continuing to work with Kent Fire & Rescue Service to provide advice to owners and landlords of tower blocks."

A spokesman at Canterbury City Council said: "The cladding on our three blocks is an external wall insulation system. It is not the type used at Grenfell Tower and does not use the same materials."

At Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, a spokesman said: "We do not have any buildings with this type of cladding. Housing stock, in the main, is looked after by Town and Country Housing Group."

At Town and Country, spokesman Rachel Branson said: "I have spoken to the development director and we have no cladding that is considered dangerous."

Sevenoaks District Council added: "Our housing stock was transferred to a housing association in 1989. Our property team have confirmed we do not have cladding on any buildings we own."

Ashford, Shepway and Dover also confirmed similiar cladding is not used in their areas.

Communities and local government secretary, Sajid Javid, said the government has now identified 11 tower blocks with cladding similar to Grenfell Tower in London.

Tests on buildings around the country is under way after the prime minster said central government would pay for those tests.

In a Commons speech, Theresa May said urgent testing is being conducted to discover the full extent of any risk. She added: "We cannot and will not ask people to live in unsafe homes."

There was also a pledge to re-house any tenants that are found to be living in unsafe buildings.

Thousands lap up open air shows within the woodland

Rick Astley and Elbow performed two hit shows at Bedgebury last weekend

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

FOREST Live staged its annual back-to-back shows at Bedgebury Pinetum last week with Eighties' star Rick Astley and top-selling group Elbow headlining the weekend of live music.

Organised as part of a string of shows organised by the Forestry Commission on its sites around the UK, the shows proved a big hit with fans and were blessed with good weather.

Rick Astley's come a long way since he hit the big time back in the late 1980s as he came rolling off the Stock Aitken and Waterman production line with a string of monster hits.

Having gone to ground for years, now a sprightly 51 he is enjoying the combination of a wave of nostalgia and a revived commercial clout too, courtesy of his recent chart-topping album, 50 - his first number one since 1987's debut Whenever You Need Somebody.

And he didn't disappoint a crowd eager to relive their youth and hear his new material too.

From hits like Together Forever, Hold Me In Your Arms and Whenever You Need Somebody, he got the crowd up on their feet.

He also pulled a couple of surprises - first with a live rendition of Ed Sheeran's recent hit Shape of You and, somewhat more unexpectedly, a cover version of ACDC's Highway to Hell. Sounds awful, was actually a real triumph.

But it was his finale - Never Gonna Give You Up - which proved the highlight of the evening as they song which catapulted him to superstardom and then managed to become an odd internet sensation 30 years later, rounded off his show in style.

Perhaps there can be few more contrasting styles than with Saturday night's follow-up.

Elbow have long established themselves as a band of real quality and, now seven studio albums to the good, are finely polished live performers.

In a well-balanced set combining plenty of most recent album, Little Fictions, but also a pleasing round up of some of their best known tracks - including a handful from the hugely successful Seldom Seen Kid album such as Mirrorball and The Bones of You - the band entranced a sell out audience as the sun set in west Kent.

BACK: Rick Astley dazzled on Friday, then it was the turn of Elbow

Performing before a notably larger crowd than the Rick Astley show the night before, lead singer Guy Garvey also paid tribute to those killed in the recent terror attacks in the band's home city of Manchester, dedicating Station Approach to the fallen.

The show came to a powerful end with One Day Like This.

Two nights, two very different performances, but both something the organisers can be justly proud of.

Queues were short to all the key music event essentials, such as food, drink and lavatories, and the atmosphere at both impressive.

Roll on, next summer.

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CROWDS: Thousands turned up for the shows. Pictures: ANDY ARCHER

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Dazzling displays mark anniversary of naval loss

Big crowds lined the River Medway last weekend for a spectacular series of events, and a dramatic firework display, to remember a bruising fight

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THOUSANDS of people lined the banks of the Medway last weekend to relive a defining defeat in the history of the British navy.

The Battle of Medway took place in 1667. A complex tangle of politics, warmongering and broken alliances at the time all eventually led to a flotilla of Dutch warships sailing up the Medway to Chatham and laying waste to almost everything on the water.

Smashing through a chain stretched across the river at Upnor, nothing failed to stop their determined assault.

They even made off with our naval flagship of the time.

It proved so damaging funding was dramatically increased as a result and the British naval fleet would go on to become one of the most impressive in the world.

Now 350 year later, Medway Council decided to mark the event with a spectacular nine days of celebrations.

It climaxed with a huge show on the actual waters of the river.

With giant screens relaying the key events of the major battle, thousands of onlookers crowded along the water's edge near the outlet centre and Odeon cinema, overlooking Upnor Castle.

The end of the evening saw the sky filled with a major firework display with accompanying music in the Medway in Flames finale.

Afterwards, a jubilant council leader praised the work that had gone into the whole Battle of Medway extravaganza.

Alan Jarrett said: "The Battle of Medway commemoration finale was a triumph.

"I was very pleased to see so many families coming out to enjoy the day's activities, and even more people joined us later in the day for the spectacular evening show – we estimate around 20,000 across the day, and thousands more watched the finale live on social media and on the website.

"We were incredibly lucky with the weather and I'd like to thank all council staff and stewards, together with the police and other partners, who worked hard in the heat to ensure the smooth and safe running of the event.

"We have received so much positive feedback and therefore I think it's safe to say it really was a very special event for Medway – something that will be remembered for many years to come.

"The Battle of Medway commemorations have been a real high point for Medway. It's really important we remember the history on our doorstep that is of national and international significance, and it's also about putting us on the map as a desirable place to live, work, visit, learn and do business.

"By raising the profile of Medway and making more people aware of what we have to offer, we can drive investment locally which allows the area to prosper and leads to improved quality of life for residents."

Earlier in the week, there had been dozens of events staged around Medway including Rochester's historic High Street all to mark what turned out to be one of the greatest disasters in England's naval history, already bankrupt by almost continuous campaigns, the Great Fire of London and ravaged by the plague.

Under Lieutenant Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, the Dutch captured the fort at Sheerness before entering the River Medway to attack the English fleet at Chatham.

In the end, they towed away the Royal Charles, England's flagship and burned a number of ships. To prevent their capture and block the channel, the Royal Navy sank around 30 of its largest ships.

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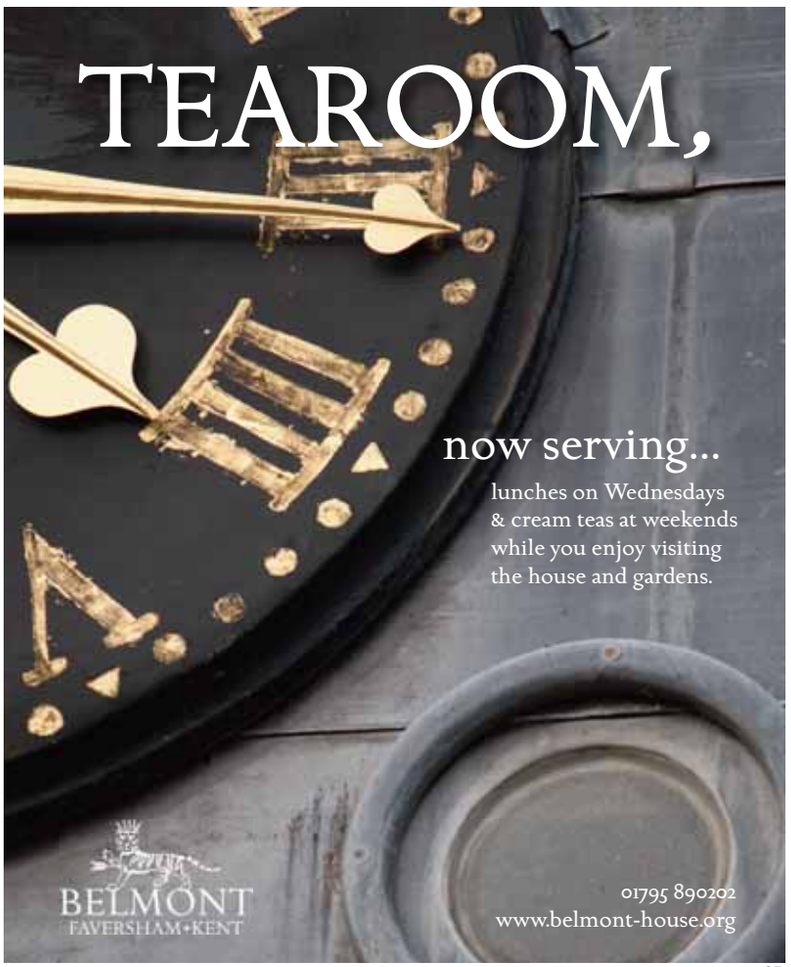

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READY: As the festival moves along, Whitstable Harbour Day will put the working harbour front and centre of its celebrations

Harbour Day emerges as part of Whitstable reshuffle

Hugely popular, this summer sees a different line-up of events in seaside town

A CHANGE is as good as a rest, as they say, and so this summer the activity in Whitstable will certainly be very different to that which the seaside town has seen in recent years.

Firstly, the Whitstable Oyster Festival, which last year pulled in a remarkable 72,000 people over 10-days of non-stop entertainment throughout the town, will this year be a very different animal.

Condensed into just three days at the end of July, it will still serve up plenty of family fun - but in a far more relaxed manner.

Damaged - in particular - by a beach party organised via social media and not part of the festival, the mess left behind created plenty of headaches for locals, prompting Canterbury City Council to have a rethink on just how to structure the event.

The upshot is most of the activity now pushed along the coast towards the Tankerton Slopes, where the festival's heart will be relocated and away from the popular working harbour.

Also going this year, in an event designed to be far more peaceful for those who live and work in the town, will be the fireworks display, outdoor cinema and live music line-up.

However, the harbour will be the centrepiece of Whitstable Harbour Day on August 5.

Organised by Whitstable Maritime, it aims to celebrate the town's connections with the sea from the past, present and future.

There will be a host of family entertainment, including boat trips, an aquarium, bird-watching, guided walks and boatbuilding.

In addition, there will be stalls selling food, drink and crafts.

One of the attractions on the day will be a race of Thames barges and smacks from the harbour.

In addition, a local drama group are preparing a short play especially written for young children while the Horsebridge Centre will be running a maritime heritage experience.

Other events include lifeboat displays, model boating, a model railway, art workshops, a scavenger hunt on the beach, coastal gardening, plus live music.

Gordon Vincent, director of Whitstable Maritime, said: "The people of Whitstable are rightly proud of their maritime heritage and there has been wonderful support for Harbour Day from local charities, traders, and the council.

"We are looking forward to a great family day out."

Access to the Harbour Day is free. Further details can be found in the souvenir programme that will be on sale from July.

Whitstable Maritime, which is based at the Horsebridge, is a charitable organisation which works in partnership with other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to help residents, visitors, schoolchildren and students enjoy exploring the town's connections with the sea.

Over the next three years projects it is involved in include creating a maritime discovery centre, an annual maritime festival, restoring the 42-ft Gamecock oyster yawl, and establishing designed coastal trails running from Whitstable to Faversham.

For more information see whitstablemaritime.co.uk.

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World's biggest bouncy castle set to spring into Dreamland

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

DREAMLAND's diverse offering continues this summer as it welcomes what is known as 'the world's biggest bouncy castle' to the Margate leisure park.

Measuring some 21-metres square, and filled with 1,143 cubic metres of air, it boasts of being taller than the Great Wall of China and three times the size of the Berline Wall.

That's almost five metres longer than the previous record holder.

What's more, both adults and children can kick their shoes off and enjoy bounding about the inflatable, which can take up to 100 people at any one time.

Created by the teams at House of Bestival and Something Creatives, the castle stands at nearly 13 metres tall at its highest point.

It has already proved a big hit with appearances at a host of festivals.

What's more, companies are being encouraged to hire it out for an unusual bit of team building.

Chris Snelson, programming and events manager at Dreamland, said: "We are so excited for the bouncy castle to come to Dreamland this summer. Whether you're a family or even on a company day out - imagine jumping around with up to 99 other people - it's going to be so much fun."

The inflatable will be at Dreamland for two weeks during the peak school summer holidays - with the first bouncers getting to grips with it on August 12 and the air being let out after August 26.

Open to visitors from 11.30am on every day of its stay, a 10-minute bounce will cost £3.50 or £3 for members of the park.

It is advised to book in advance to secure a slot as spaces during peak periods are likely to be limited.

There are also group options for private hire.

To find out more and to book, visit dreamland.co.uk.

Meanwhile, Dreamland will be hoping the recent good weather helps swell crowds yet further over the coming months as it looks to put itself on a firm financial footing ahead of what is expected to be a sale to a new operator later this year.

It has invested some £25 million since last year, including a host of additional rides and bar areas. It is free to enter with a pay-per-ride or wristband option.

TALL: Apparently it is taller than the Great Wall of China...but you probably can't see this from space

Castle hits the right note

CHILHAM Castle's family friendly Chase & Chill festival takes place on July 1.

There's fun and live music throughout the day and into the evening as well. Gates open from 11am to 11pm.

Voice of Strictly's show

STRICTLY Come Dancing vocalist Lance Ellington is bringing his new show to Gravesend's Woodville Theatre on November 9.

The son of legendary bandleader Ray Ellington, will bring his Sings Broadway show with a band which includes George Michael's sax player Ed Barker.

Orchestra's tuning up

THE Royal Philharmonic Orchestra will be joined by Laura Wright and Jonathan Antoine for the Rochester Castle Proms on July 15 - the finale of a string of shows at the historic venue.

Get in the 80s groove

GET back to the decade of big hair, big shoulder pads and big music, as The Forum in Tunbridge Wells hosts one of its regular Back To The 80s nights.

Featuring non-stop hits from the era, grab your Frankie Say t-shirt on Saturday July 1 from 8pm to 1am. Tickets are £7 in advance.

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Tea party at Hotel du Vin

TUNBRIDGE Wells' Hotel du Vin celebrates 20 years in the town with a special garden tea party on July 8.

It includes a tour of the hotel before food and drink on the terrace. Tickets cost £25.

Edinburgh preview event

SATIRIST and TV regular Matt Forde and comic Annie McGrath preview their show for the Edinburgh Festival at Folkestone's Quarterhouse on July 22.

Forde is best known for appearances on Have I Got News For You, 8 Out of 10 Cats and as a writer on The Last Leg.

Chamber music finale

MAIDSTONE Wind Symphony will round off its season with an Evening of Chamber Music on July 1 at the Salvation Army Church Hall in Union Street.

It begins at 7.30pm and tickets cost £5 on the door.

Quex revs up for VW event

QUEX Park hosts the VW Show next weekend in Birchington.

Running from June 30 to July 2, it will offer VW fans everything from goods and automobilia to food, drink and music and dance in the evenings.

Plus, of course, displays of the vehicles.

Review: Force is strong with Star Wars Identities

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

STAR Wars may well have happened a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, but it is the present day in which it has not so much hit its stride in terms of serving the legions of fans devoted to it, but broken out into a full-on sprint.

From its annual Celebration events - held around the world - to Disney's merciless exploitation of anything and everything to do with the franchise, it crosses generations and continues to excite; helped greatly by a new series of films to ensure everyone from their 50s down know their Jedi from their Wookie.

And it is that broad appeal which makes up the audience for Star Wars Identities, an exhibition currently running at the O2 Arena in Greenwich.

An extensive display of props, costumes, storyboards, models and early sketches, it is a fascinating exploration of the Star Wars universe with a heavy focus on the original - and let's face it the best - trilogy.

There are original C3PO and R2D2s, costumes worn in the Empire Strikes Back by Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher. You can even stare straight into the (original) eyes of Jabba the Hutt or gawp at Yoda.

As ever with Star Wars, it is the baddies which are so impressive - thus Darth Vader gets his own special place to stand and admire him - while the ability to see original Stormtrooper costumes and the mighty Boba Fett just reminds you what iconic creations they are.

Everyone visiting gets a headset which when you enter the range of a wireless transmitter means you get a commentary to accompany key parts of the exhibition, while there is also the ability to create your own Star Wars character as you go.

The exhibition isn't particularly cheap, but it is well run and if you like the films it's really rather good.

It runs until early September. Tickets cost £20/25 for adults and £10/15 for children.

YODA: Rather little he is

VADER: It's the man himself

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Be alert to health risks of your long haul flights

Deep vein thrombosis can affect anyone, but as **Lucy Maddox** reports, there are ways to avoid it

IT's summer holiday season - and while jetting off somewhere sunny is all about fun and relaxation, planes can come with their own set of health risks.

The first to spring to mind is deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a blood clot that develops in one of your body's deep veins, usually in the leg. It can occur on dry land, but is associated with flying - mainly long-haul flights - due to sitting in one position for so long.

"The human body was designed for movement, not to stay still. Prolonged sitting - staying in one position for a long period of time - adds to the static load on our musculoskeletal system, and prevents effective circulation of blood through your body," explains Jay Brewer, professional head of Clinical Wellbeing at Nuffield Health.

But, surely this is something you only need to worry about once you reach a certain age?

Actually, while it is more common in older age groups (DVT affects around one in every 1,000 people, mostly over-40s), it can affect younger people, and there are some specific risk factors that may apply to younger women.

Generally, the chances of developing a blood clot on a flight are slim, so there's no need to panic. But it's worth being clued up about the warning signs, and any circumstances that may mean you need to take extra care.

The contraceptive pill or pregnancy hormones can put you at a higher risk.

Having a condition or treatment that can cause your blood to clot more easily, such as cancer (and chemotherapy and radiotherapy), heart and lung disease or inflammatory bowel disease, should also be considered as factors in the possibility of developing DVT.

RELAX: Simple steps to avoid the perils of DVT on summer flights

If you're concerned or unsure, speak to your GP for advice.

Warning signs can include pain, swelling, tenderness, a heavy ache in the affected area and warm, red skin. Often the pain can become more severe when you bend your foot upwards towards the knee.

If you notice any possible symptoms, it's important to get it checked with a medical professional as soon as possible. If a blood clot's suspected or diagnosed, you may need anticoagulant medicine to reduce further clotting and stop any existing clots getting bigger.

The condition is highly treatable, but in more severe cases and without prompt treatment, serious complications can sometimes occur.

A number of things are recommended to decrease the likelihood of DVT while flying. Compression socks can help speed up blood flow in the veins, which can cut the risk of clots, and are good for long-haul flights.

Try not to stay in your seat in one position for too long either - have a stretch and move your feet and legs frequently, even when you're stuck in your chair. Stopping smoking and keeping generally fit and healthy helps too.

Joe's big screen hits

X FACTOR winner Joe McElderry will be rockin' and rollin' into Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall in August to promote his new album Saturday Night at the Movies.

Packed with iconic songs from stage and screen, he will be promoting it with a tour which includes a date at the seaside venue on August 13.

Tickets are on sale now and range in price from £20 to £43.50.

Summer rock school

PETER Gill's Rock School returns to Canterbury this summer for young musicians, offering a host of workshops including song-writing and performance skills.

It will be held at The Gulbenkian at the University of Kent between August 21-25. It costs £150 each for the full week which each day starting at 10.30am and finishing by 4pm. See petergillrockschools.co.uk.

Pedal onto cycle routes

CYCLISTS have miles of new routes to explore as Medway Council officially opened a network of sporting and recreational trails during National Bike Week.

Nearly £3 million of both central and local government funding has gone into improving cycling opportunities in the towns.

To download a copy of the routes, visit medway.gov.uk/cycling of pick up a copy at local libraries.

DJ Greg James booked

RADIO 1 DJ and Official Chart Show presenter Greg James will be signing copies of his new book along with award-winning journalist and radio presenter Chris Smith in Bluewater on July 27.

The pair are promoting children's book Kid Normal and will be at Waterstones in the centre's West Village from 3pm. It's free to attend but you must have a copy of the book to meet the duo.

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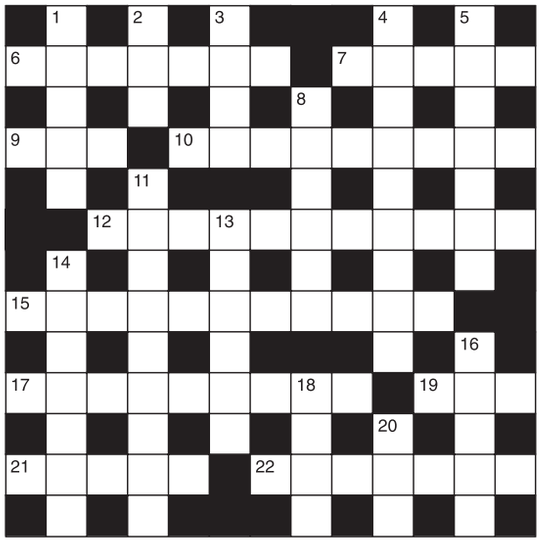


Quick

Across

6. Camp without tents (7)
7. Uncertainty (5)
9. Objective (3)
10. About (9)
12. Blending (11)
15. Acknowledgment (11)
17. Abatement (9)
19. Pale (3)
21. Dodge (5)
22. Income (7)

Down

1. Boundary (5)
2. Enemy (3)
3. Domesticated (4)
4. State (9)
5. Desert (7)
8. Is unable (6)
11. Sleep-inducing (9)
13. Exile (6)
14. Taciturnity (7)
16. Worth (5)
18. Finished (4)
20. Write (3)

Cryptic

Across

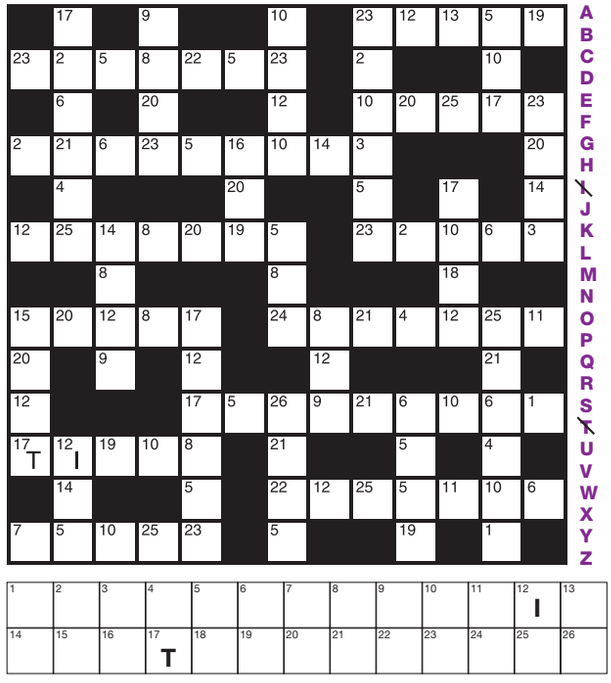
6. French boarding house appreciated by the retired (7)
7. Stop, or pass on (5)
9. Does it come softly from the coop? (3)
10. A brave man (3,6)
12. Only a personal impression but admissible as evidence (11)
15. Proceeded to argue like Siamese twins? (6,5)
17. Not up to date with the accounts? (2,7)
19. Catch a number on the rebound (3)
21. Threatened strike that doesn't come off (5)
22. Grave words for those who are late (7)

Down

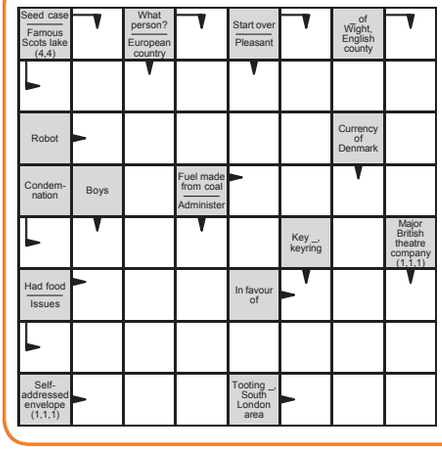
1. Poe's a weird storyteller (5)
2. Spend that American note (3)
3. Little space in which to think (4)
4. Flew round in a miraculous way (9)
5. Word of praise (7)
8. Type of briefs used in the textile industry (6)
11. Italian girl in disorderly style on arising (9)
13. Incorrectly tagged labour-saving device (6)
14. It may lead to a quick duck for any batsman (7)
16. Time of strain? (5)
18. Not silent tears (4)
20. Swallowed with a little water (3)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword



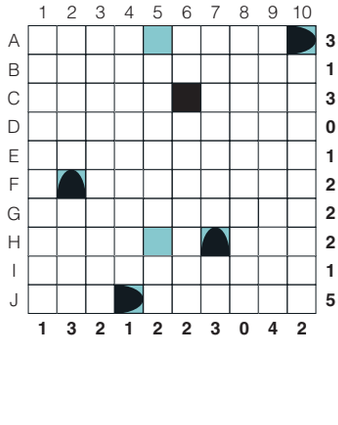
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

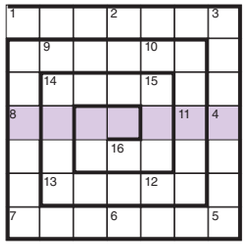
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Young horse
2. Touch down
3. Narrow valley
4. Nervous
5. Egg part
6. Type
7. Diesel oil
8. Conceited
9. Invalid
10. Suggestive look
11. Roster
12. Yes votes
13. Broth
14. Young salmon
15. Hindquarters
16. Animal skin

Keyword clue: A bird

SUDOKU

Hard

		2			6			
				8				9
9	4			1		8		
7			6				2	
	3	5				9	6	
	6							1
		6		3			5	2
3				9			1	
			4			3		

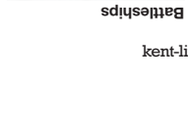
Easy

2			5			3		6
		5	3		4		2	9
	9			2		4		
	6	2			1	9		4
9		7		8		1		
		8	9			5	3	
		6						1
8	5			4	6	7		
	2		1		7			8

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships



Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 6 Pension; 7 Colon; 9 Coo; 10 Red Indian; 12 Fingerprint; 15 Joined issue; 17 In arrears; 19 Net; 21 Feint; 22 Epitaph. Down: 1 Aesop; 2 Use; 3 Pore; 4 Wonderful; 5 Hosanna; 8 Fibres; 11 Signorina; 13 Gadget; 14 Bouncer; 16 Tempo; 18 Rips; 20 Ate.

Quick
Across: 6 Bivouac; 7 Doubt; 9 Aim; 10 Regarding; 12 Combination; 15 Recognition; 17 Remission; 19 Wan; 21 Avoid; 22 Revenue. Down: 1 Limit; 2 Foe; 3 Tame; 4 Condition; 5 Abandon; 8 Cannot; 11 Soporific; 13 Banish; 14 Reserve; 16 Value; 18 Over; 20 Pen.

Codeword
1=Y, 2=H, 3=K, 4=W, 5=E, 6=R, 7=J, 8=L, 9=P, 10=A, 11=G, 12=I, 13=Z, 14=C, 15=Q, 16=B, 17=T, 18=X, 19=D, 20=U, 21=O, 22=V, 23=S, 24=F, 25=N, 26=M

Word Spiral
1 Foal; 2 Land; 3 Dene; 4 Edgy; 5 Yolk; 6 Kind; 7 Derv; 8 Vain; 9 Null; 10 Leer; 11 Rota; 12 Ayes; 13 Soup; 14 Parr; 15 Rump; 16 Pelt.
Keyword: Vulture

Sudoku - Easy

2	8	4	5	1	9	3	7	6
6	1	5	3	7	4	8	2	9
7	9	3	6	2	8	4	5	1
5	6	2	7	3	1	9	8	4
9	3	7	4	8	5	1	6	2
1	4	8	9	6	2	5	3	7
4	7	6	8	9	3	2	1	5
8	5	1	2	4	6	7	9	3
3	2	9	1	5	7	6	4	8

Sudoku - Hard

8	7	2	9	4	6	1	3	5
6	5	1	7	8	3	2	4	9
9	4	3	2	1	5	8	7	6
7	8	9	6	5	1	4	2	3
1	3	5	8	2	4	9	6	7
2	6	4	3	7	9	5	8	1
4	9	6	1	3	8	7	5	2
3	2	8	5	9	7	6	1	4
5	1	7	4	6	2	3	9	8

At sea with the Muse and my own butler...

Fancy a cruise in the lap of luxury? Start saving now because the high life is open to everybody on board the cruise ship Silver Muse as **Laura Ivill** and her mum Sonia discovered...

Peering through my binoculars at a flooded caldera, I study anchored catamarans and motorboats skimming across the surface. Star of the show is Silversea's new ship Silver Muse, looking sleek, modern and majestic.

With 400 staff and crew for its 596 passengers, nine dining venues and all-butler suites, I'm expecting a very different cruise experience for my holiday ahead.

I am joining a 10-day voyage through Greece (Santorini, Mykonos, Rhodes) and Turkey (for the ancient ruins of Ephesus and Pergamon). Right now, I'm on the Greek island of Santorini, a photographer's gift with its ancient whitewashed, one-storey buildings and red-streaked volcanic cliffs.

I flew in a day early with my mum Sonia to enjoy the croissant-shaped island's beauty, staying at Canaves Oia Suites in the picture-perfect town of Oia on the northern tip. Part of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World collection.

We have enough time to explore the stylish shopping of Oia's car-free lanes (I should have packed less and bought more), before taking a taxi ride to the old port and a cable car down over the cliffs to the old quay.

We speed across the caldera to our waiting ship, eager to explore the passenger decks (floors five to 11). Launched in April in Italy (Silversea is Italian), Silver Muse is the largest in the company's fleet. Silversea ships are comparatively small-scale, uber-luxury experiences: either expedition ships for nature lovers, or cruise ships for eating, drinking, being entertained, relaxing by the pool and seeing the daily-changing sights ashore.

Our Superior Veranda Suite is gorgeous – marble bathroom (with bath and separate shower), dressing room, sitting room and bedroom with blackout curtains. Every suite has butler service, turndown and a terrace. Early-morning arrivals in port are a highlight of my day. Sliding open the patio doors, I'm greeted with soft morning light, islands on the horizon and a pilot boat from our destination port skimming up alongside to bring us in. A call to my butler, Pedro, brings a fresh pot of tea – no fiddling with kettles here.

The ship's decor is a triumph. With nods to the golden age of the cruise liner, the central staircase is curved and sensual. Woods give warmth, and tones throughout are whispers of champagne, caramel, whipped cream, chocolate and oatmeal, with a dash of lime.

Modern artworks add colour and personality, and a glittering azure pool (flanked by two Jacuzzis) is a perfect match for the sea. An attentive waiter makes sure you are NEVER without a drink. Pommery is the house champagne, or choose anything from the cocktail list – a tome so inviting you could start upon arrival and just keep going.

Despite the overflowing alcohol, everyone is well behaved. The emphasis with Silver Muse is on the genteel gourmet experience. Nine dining rooms all have their own ambience and menus, and guests are invited to experiment. After dinner, a first-rate song-and-dance troupe provide entertainment, enhanced by state-of-the-art sound and lighting.

For five glorious days, we eat and drink like queens, laze on sun-loungers, giggle in Jacuzzis, and dress up in our glad rags to be serenaded by jazz. We're pampered in the spa and even find time to soak up the Aegean's rich ancient culture on guided tours – all without lifting a finger. I could get used to this.

The pool deck on the Silversea Silver Muse PHOTO: PA

Sail of the century

Next year, Silver Muse will be operating a seven-day Med trip from Rome to Venice, calling at:
Sorrento
Taormina
Katakolon
Sarande
Dubrovnik
Split.

Departing on May 29, fares start from £3,900 per person, based on double occupancy of the Classic Veranda Suite.

The price includes gourmet cuisine, the personalised service of a butler, a generous selection of amenities, complimentary beverages, wines and spirits, a stocked in-suite fridge, on-board gratuities, and complimentary Wi-Fi for each guest.

Flights extra.

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feedback

May responsible for election farce

THE election was always Theresa May's to lose - and by golly she almost made it!

Stop trying to buy Labour votes by moving to the left and get back to Conservative ideology.

If the electorate wants Labour policies they will vote Labour, which they did in spades.

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

We all got it wrong didn't we?

THE election result, likewise the referendum and the American election, demonstrates that journalists, political commentators and MPs don't have the grasp of complicated issued they think they have.

I don't recall one of them predicting a hung parliament. They were too busy ridiculing (including from his own party) Jeremy Corbyn.

He stuck to his principles and pulled in the votes.

Even Theresa May's own goal, penalising pensioners (the obvious issue that opponents would seize on) did not indicate the likelihood to them.

Personally, I took particular note of the fact that three independent opinion polls, overnight, halved the Tory lead.

The facts remain the agenda, Brexit, is still the same and I see no logical reason for a change of prime minister.

The negotiating position might be weaker but possibly redressed if the Germany electorate do the same to their leader.

I hope we don't see a conspiracy of vitriolic Tories forcing out May.

D Hedges,
Chatham

Don't forget the 'good old days'

BEN Murphy [KoS, letters, last week] being obviously a Labour supporter I wonder if he has ever experienced a real Labour government,

I am not talking about the Blair-Brown days; they were not real Labour. I am talking about the sixties and seventies when the unions ran riot with strikes in the car industry with Red Robbo and the mines with Scargill.

We had a three day week and the country was on its knees. Well, if this Labour government ever gets into power the same will happen again and it is already starting to happen with John McDonnell calling for the unions to march on parliament.

I retired after 51 years in the printing industry and for 30 of those years I was in a union only because of the closed shop in that industry, but in all that time I am proud that I never paid the Labour Party levy on my subscriptions.

During the nineties I was one of the largest print suppliers to government departments and we loved it when Labour were in power because they spent and wasted money like it was going out of fashion.

To give you just one of many hundred examples, we regularly printed two booklets for a department. In one February I got a call from the print buyer asking for an urgent quote for how many copies can we have for £80,000. I gave them a price and was asked if they could have an invoice that afternoon and he would give us an order; we were paid in six days, printed the job and kept asking for a delivery address, after six months I was told to scrap the lot!

The only reason Labour did so well in the election is that they produced a manifesto of bribes and people fell for it hook line and sinker.

Michael Carr,
Ashford

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Power of the young is inspiration to us all

SEVERAL elections ago I bumped into a Labour candidate in our ultra-safe Tory seat.

He told me that he had canvassed in a picturesque village and had been upbraided by a Tory matron, for having the temerity to show such disrespect to the sitting Tory MP, by canvassing for votes.

I see something of that same sense of entitlement in Peter Booth's lecture [KoS, letters, last week] to Canterbury's students for daring to vote Labour, unseating a seemingly unshiftable Tory, Sir Julian Brazier [who had served for 30 years], in the process.

I imagine that Mr Booth is of a similar demographic to me - maybe a baby boomer or older, homeowner, nice pension, access to free university education in his youth.

Where he and I part company, however, is that I celebrate our young voters, coming out in bigger numbers than ever, and discovering that their vote actually can change things, even in complacent Canterbury.

Unlike far too many of my selfish generation, I have no wish to pull the ladder up on those who come after me. I want them to have the same access we had to free education, affordable housing and an NHS run by the NHS.

No magic money tree is needed for that to happen - just a change in the political and economic priorities that should truly reflect the needs of all our people, rather than the vested interests of the Conservatives' friends and donors.

Finally, Mr Booth's straight-faced dismissal of Labour's tuition fees policy, as a stunt to buy the student vote, made me chuckle.

Did he see no irony at all as he watched his triple-lock pension pop into his bank account again, to add to the £200 winter fuel allowance, free prescriptions, and his free bus pass?

Dennis Clegg
Maidstone

Both parties are to blame for debt

BEN Murphy misses the point that the national debt rose to almost £2 trillion under both Labour and Tory governments.

They both wasted billions bombing the Middle East into a 'basket case' to make us a terrorist threat. They both have been giving money to crooks and despots, while telling us they can't afford services.

Neither of them have done anything about the chronic waste of billions in the NHS, or the importing of cheap labour while we pay billions for 1.6 million to sit on their backsides.

Enough of this pathetic political point scoring, I say a plague on all their houses. They try to politicise the tragedy in London when all parties are culpable. They know the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

We need a sea change in how we are led and the breaking up of the Tory/Labour, opposition for opposition's sake, cartel, or this country is heading for the dustbin of history.

If MPs really cared about us, they'd work together to solve our problems.

Phil Granger,
West Malling

Oppose Manston before its too late

SO the cat is out of the bag: a re-opened Manston Airport means, "night flights may be 'unavoidable', amid fears the plans will 'devastate' nearby towns". [KoS, last week].

The proposed airport is massive, with going on for 30,000 flights a year. A noisy, dirty, polluting, 24/7 airport that size may well blight local properties, leading to a drop in house prices; reduce local children's educational attainment (because of disturbed sleep); and bring ill-health and loss of wellbeing to local people and anything that breathes.

Don't accept this environmental vandalism, and threat to your way of life. Take part in the statutory consultation by going to rsp.co.uk and completing the feedback form, saying you strongly disagree with the proposals for Manston Airport.

P Hendy,
Herne Bay

Time for airport plans to be over

MANSTON admitting to nightflights should, for once and for all end this ridiculous call for it to be reopened.

It will blight lives not create prosperity.

I Jones,
Broadstairs

your say...

Send us your views.
Write to: Room G46, The Panorama, 130 Park Street, Ashford, Kent TN24 8EZ
Email: editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Twitter: @kosmedia

Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Sunset at West Kingsdown

by **Michael Forrester from West Kingsdown**

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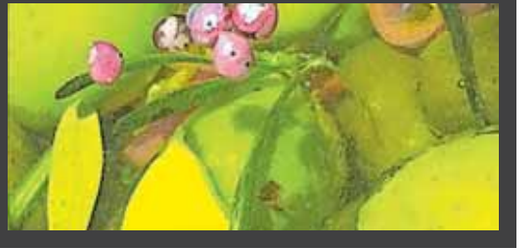

holidays

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We Love the 60s Seaside Christmas Party

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Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

Friday 10 November, 2017 • Quote: CP11-1-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for an early taste of Christmas - for over 40s only - as we rock the weekend away to the sounds of the 60s. Our brilliant entertainment programmes feature top 60s bands and tribute acts including Marty Wilde and the Wildcats, Union Gap UK, The New Honeycombs, Dave Grant of Paper Lace and The Beatle (John Lennon tribute). Enjoy non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and half-price drinks at this rockin' party weekend.

INCLUDED: Half Price bar drinks - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers - lunch times and evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet (bed linen and towels included) - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Mamma Mia & Super 70s Spring Party

3 nights half board PLUS £149pp

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

Friday 9 March, 2018 • Quote: MS3-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Spring blast - for over 40s only - as we rock the weekend away to the sounds of the Super 70s. Our brilliant entertainment bill features Abba's Angels and a screening of Mamma Mia the Movie, Showaddywaddy, Saturday Night Bee Gees, Little Eagle, a celebration of Neil Diamond PLUS house band Sounds Imperial. You'll enjoy non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and half-price drinks at this rockin' party weekend.

INCLUDED: Half-price drinks all weekend - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers lunch times & evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet (bed linen and towels included) - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Mamma Mia & Super 70s Christmas Party

3 nights half board PLUS from £259pp

Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight

Friday 1 December, 2017 • Quote CN12-KOS

Abba and the 70s take centre stage on our over 40s Christmas Party at Warner's Norton Grange resort with Abba's Angels, a screening of Mamma Mia the movie, tributes to The Four Seasons, The Bee Gees and more. Enjoy good food, comfortable en-suite accommodation, great entertainment and Free drinks every night with the GN Team on hand to ensure a fun-filled festive atmosphere.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking

Isle of Wight Sounds of the 60s Carry on New Year Party

3 nights half board PLUS from £239pp

Warner Bembridge Coast, Isle of Wight

Friday 5 January, 2018 • Quote: BE1-KOS

GN Holidays & Voyages are taking over Warner's Bembridge Coast hotel again in early January 2018 - our 10th year in a row. Our must-do annual party, for over 40s only, has guests returning year after year to 'Carry On' celebrating the New Year. With a packed entertainment programme featuring original 60s bands Union Gap UK and The Cufflinks plus Vicki Lambert's tribute to 60s divas, great food, Free drinks from 6pm to midnight nightly, and free car ferry crossing, you're assured a great start to 2018.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade to main hotel building from £30pp • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking

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Your guide to...

Main Dealer **Servicing**

Main dealers up their game to ensure the best service

IT can seem easy to go to a 'quick fit' car centre for a problem to save on high car costs, skimming on vital 'consumables' such as exhausts, tyres, batteries and other routing services.

But dealers are biting back, arguing that drivers using service bays from the reliable main dealer are open to more offers ensuring a one-stop shop for all the vehicle needs.

Main dealers are stepping up more than ever to compete with these 'quick-fit' centres, not just in quality, but price and convenience, especially when it comes to warranty work.

Using manufacturer trained workshops guarantees genuine parts are used as well as realistic pricing that will not alter depending on the outcome of the service you're after.

Main dealers are using a 'menu option' for pricing, allowing car owners to choose exactly what they would like done, avoiding surprise charges for extras they did not ask for.

COST: It's a big expense - so treat it to the best levels of care

Some dealers are also allowing the chance to spread the cost via a servicing scheme (turn over for more details on that), and there also loyalty schemes for owners of older vehicles.

Main dealers are also trying to extend their opening hours to meet increased demand.

Car owners anticipate dropping their car off on the way to work and collecting it on the way home and dealers are picking up on this to match 'quick-fix' centres.

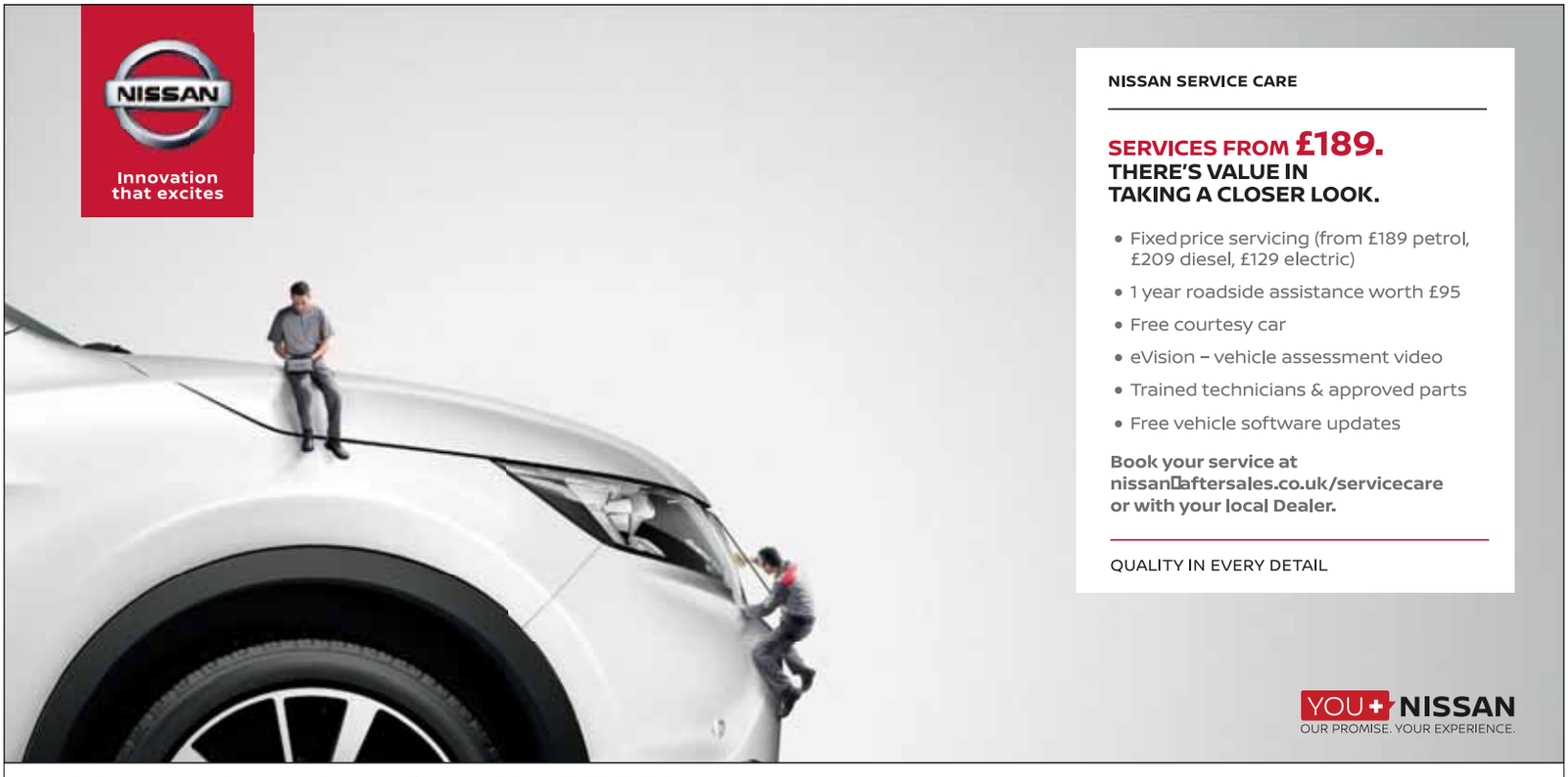
Booking is easier too, with main dealers taking bookings centrally so car owners can choose a service slot that best suits them.

In theory, you can take your car to another dealer for warranty work, but dealers warn of the dangers of this.

If you have any problems with the quality of your warranty work, going to the original dealer avoids any confusion of the details of your warranty.

When it comes to your warranty dealer: consistency is key.

Main car dealers rely on happy customers returning, and that returning customer may even be enticed by that new car on display.



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Monthly payment plans can take the sting out of those vital servicing visits

THE price of an MOT or car service can often make drivers' eyes water, which is why more and more dealers are offering monthly payment plans to cover vehicles for regular services to prolong your vehicle's life.

Mini was one of the first companies to introduce the plan in 2002, after EU legislation gave car owners the freedom to go where they liked for a service, and since then, numerous other companies have followed suit.

These monthly plans have proved excellent value for money, and with direct debit they are easy to do. Car owners can even transfer the plan onto a cars new owner should you decide to sell on.

POPULAR: Big brands offer a host of cost-effective servicing options now

Monthly payments work out cheaper than one-off costs, and a majority of the plans run for between three and five years. Once the owner is paying for a monthly plan, they will not be affected by any rising costs, and car dealers are always offering extra perks to entice buyers, such as a courtesy car.

Dealers will sometime offer free, or low-cost, health checks, making sure weather-vital traits such as air-conditioning or anti-freeze are in tip-top shape.

Going to one of the of the main dealers as part of the monthly plan means they will be able to sort out any recalls and update software when a car comes in for service.

Main dealers are, as a whole, more reliable, and a majority of them offer service plans, especially if it is a prestige model. Premium vehicles are more appealing for used car owners if they have been serviced by a main dealer, and the use of regular service plan would help towards this.

It is best to shop around for the best plan and find one that suits a budget. Weigh up the options of whether the extras offered by a main dealer would be better value for money. And if customers are not happy, main dealers are more likely to answer their concerns.

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Citigo/Fabia	£225
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vRS (Fabia/Octavia)	£275

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Citigo/Fabia	£110
Other models	£115
vRS (Fabia/Octavia)	£135

Battery including Stop/Start	
Citigo/Fabia	£189
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vRS (Fabia/Octavia)	£199

Rear brake pads	
Citigo/Fabia	£115
Other models	£125
vRS (Fabia/Octavia)	£145

Rear brake pads & discs	
Citigo/Fabia	£225
Other models	£235
vRS (Fabia/Octavia)	£275

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4x4	£659

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All AdBlue models	£1.50 per litre

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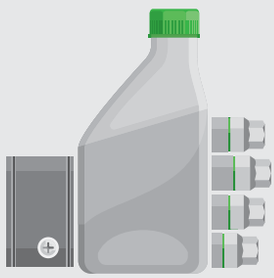

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PROTECT: Keeping your car protected is vital

Top tips to keep your car trouble free

CARS are becoming more reliable than ever, but you should not just rely on the mechanic to deal with any problems that might arise.

Getting a car fixed by a professional has become more and more costly, resulting in car-owners leaving a problem for too long. So here are some top tips to keep your car in check before something becomes a problem:

Get the car serviced, either annually or at the correct mileages. Make sure the service book is stamped, or centralised digital records are kept up to date.

Check the warranty, and beware of dangers that could affect the guarantee.

If the manufacturer issues a recall for checks or replacements, act on it. Otherwise it could affect the cars warranty or saleability further down the line.

Do not rely on the MOT certificate to ensure a car is safe and reliable. If there is a problem, get the car checked immediately.

Check lights and tyres regularly, making sure tyres are at the right pressure for the handbook. Legal tread depth is 1.6mm but most motoring companies advise 2mm, especially in adverse weather conditions.

Top up oil, washer, coolant, power steering, clutch and brake fluid levels without over-filling them. Never wait for the warning lights, as you could be caught out and put yourself at risk while driving.

Replace wiper blades if they become worn or split, and if your windscreen becomes heavy with grease or bugs, wipers will not cut it. Spray and a good amount of elbow grease will be needed.

Shop around for a service. Venture outside of the main dealer where you purchased the car, as there may be others with better value for money and customer service.

CLEAR: Simple steps can ensure trouble-free motoring

DEMAND: Stunning Lexus LC luxury coupe has proved a hit with customers even before it is officially on sale despite starting at £76,595. Photos: Lexus

Lexus LC luxury coupe is already flying off shelves

THERE couldn't be a more fitting launch location for the new flagship Lexus LC luxury coupe than high-profile showcase that is Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Early demand for the new 2+2 LC has been high with advance orders already taken for more than a third this year's United Kingdom allocation.

The all-new model, acclaimed by critics as an international design sensation and officially on sale from Saturday, will be displayed on the Lexus stand and will also take part in demonstration runs up the famous hill course in the festival's 'First Glance' programme for forthcoming prestige cars.

It's the V8-powered LC 500 that will be in action on the hill, while the five models on show on the Lexus stand will also include the LC 500h petrol-electric hybrid, the first car to be equipped with the revolutionary new Lexus multi stage hybrid system.

Both the V8-powered LC 500 and full hybrid LC 500h luxury coupes will be priced the same, starting from £76,595.

The Sport pack adds £4,000 with Sport Plus models costing £85,895.

Standard features include full LED lighting, front and rear parking sensors, Lexus Premium Navigation with 12-speaker audio and 10.25in display, semi-aniline leather upholstery, 10-way power-adjustable heated and ventilated front seats, aluminium scuff plates and sports pedals, power steering wheel adjustment, 20in alloy wheels and glass panoramic roof.

All versions are also equipped with a comprehensive safety system, which offers a whole host of features including adaptive cruise control, pre-crash safety, lane keep assist, traffic sign recognition, sway warning and automatic high beam, plus a blind spot monitor and rear cross traffic alert.

KENT LIFE

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LEXUS

CANTERBURY

Kia adds more punch to latest Picanto

Kia has updated the Picanto, its popular city car, and bosses are hoping its latest model will help it break in to a younger market. James Baggott takes it for a spin

YOU may think the Kia Picanto is the car most likely to be driven by your granny, and you'd be right.

But now the manufacturer is looking to ditch that blue-rinse image and target a younger age group with its suitably spiced-up city car.

The refreshed model teams sporty looks with a more focused driving style to woo young professionals to part with their cash. But are the tweaks enough?

Kia's worked hard to liven things up with an extended 'tiger nose' grille, smart LED driving lights and a large air intake at the front.

Double wheel arches add some flair at the sides, while a 'shark' antenna has filtered down to the city car segment for the first time.

And, for added sportiness, the GT-Line specification gets some random red trim – nothing says sporty like added red inserts – and a twin-tipped exhaust.

Kia's second best-selling UK model after Sportage, the third-generation Picanto has a huge weight on its shoulders to perform.

With wireless mobile charging, parking camera and Apple CarPlay it has the tech to tempt the youth.

At 3.6 metres, Kia has managed to create a little more cabin space by increasing the wheelbase and reducing the front overhang, but it's still a tight squeeze if sat in the back.

Up front you'll sit shoulder to shoulder with your passenger, but there's ample legroom and the driving position's comfortable.

Luggage space has gone up from 200 to a class-best 255 litres, rising to 1,010 litres with the rear seats folded.

Autonomous emergency braking – which warns, then stops you if it senses a crash – as well as a smart torque vectoring system that improves handling by braking individual wheels are also available.

Older buyers looking for a relaxed, comfortable ride will notice the improved suspension and capable way it deals with nasty road surfaces while Kia hopes younger drivers will appreciate the sprightly engines, quicker turn in and faster steering.

Overall, there's a noticeable improvement in both ride and handling, largely thanks to reduced weight and stiffer body, but whether that's suitable for you will depend on your driving style.

Kia Picanto

Price:	from £9,450
Engine tested:	1.2-litre, 83bhp, four-cylinder petrol
Performance:	0-60mph 11.6 seconds; top speed: 107mph
MPG:	61.4 combined
CO2 emissions:	106g/km

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Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km) for the model shown: Urban 47.1 (6.0), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 58.8 (4.8), CO_2 109g/km. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown: All-New Rio 'First Edition' 1.0 T-GDi 118bhp 6-speed manual ISG 5dr at £18,070 OTR including Blaze red premium paint at £495. All-New Kia Rio range available from £12,135 OTR. Offer available on purchase of an All-New Rio in the United Kingdom between 01.04.2017 – 30.06.2017. Specification shown not available on all Rio models, specification varies across the range and is subject to change without notice. †All-New Rio models only £1,250 towards your Personal Contract Purchase Deposit on '3' & 'First edition' grades. £1,000 on '1' & '2' grades. Please visit kia.com/uk or contact your Kia Dealer for full details and exclusions. T&Cs apply. 18s or over. Guarantee may be required. Kia Finance RH2 9AQ. Offer not available with any other offer. *Care-3 is the Kia servicing package that covers recommended manufacturers servicing. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. **Northgate Garage (Canterbury) Ltd trading as Canterbury Kia are a credit broker (not a lender) for the purposes of this financial promotion and can introduce you to a limited number of carefully selected finance providers and may receive a commission from them for the introduction.**

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Motability

*2017 C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £595 Advance Payment. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £1,795 Advance Payment, AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift at Nil Advance Payment, Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual at £95 Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual at £895 Advance Payment and Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £295 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st April and 30th June 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO_2 Emissions 135g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (3.8). CO_2 Emissions 110g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the range shown are: urban 40.6 (7)–70.6 (4); extra urban 55.4 (5.1)–3.1(3.4); combined 48.7 (5.8)–78.5 (3.6). The official CO_2 emissions are 130–90km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real life driving results.

*£2,500 scrappage cash offer towards purchase of selected new KADJAR and CAPTUR vehicles (from limited stock only) when ordered and registered between 9th June and 10th July 2017 for customers trading in their own vehicle registered in their name for at least 90 days. Scrappage allowance not available in conjunction with other finance deposit contributions. Retail customers only. Minimum deposit £499 on Captur and 10% minimum deposit on Kadjar. Scrappage offer eligible with 0% APR finance available on 3 year PCP. Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents (excl. Channel Islands) and over 18s only. Terms & conditions apply, see renault.co.uk/offers.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Mariana McCarthy trading as Reinstatement Services Ltd of 45 Hamsey Green Gardens, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9RS is applying for a licence to use Whites Transport, The Hanger, The Loop, Manston Kent CT12 5DE as an operating centre for 3 goods vehicles and 0 trailers

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

CTA Civil Engineering Ltd of Sunflower Cottage, Maidstone Road, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3LS is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an operating centre to keep 9 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at the operating centre at Friningham Farm, A249 Detling Hill, Detling, Maidstone, Kent ME14 3JD

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

All Mix Kent Ltd of Bankside Cottage, Sandway Road, Sandway, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 2NA is applying for a licence to use Unit 5, Detling Aerodrome Industrial Estate, Detling, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3HU as an operating centre for 6 goods vehicles and 0 trailers. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hill Crest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representers must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

Take notice that Arsto Ltd has made an application in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 for a new premises licence for 43 Biggin Street, Dover, CT16 1DB

The application is to: sell alcohol (08:00-22:00)

This application has been made to Dover District Council. A register of licensing applications can be inspected at http://www.dover.gov.uk or at the Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3PJ tel.01304 872295, by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit relevant representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by:13.07.17

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application which, upon conviction, carries a maximum fine of £5,000.

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following staff:

Marketing Assistant – Dover

Full Time - 37.5 hours per week **Salary - £21k per annum**
Closing date: On going **Interview date: TBC**
Qualifications and Experience

- Maths and English GCSE Grade C and above (or equivalent)
- Dealing with local press
- 12 months experience working in a marketing administration environment
- Social Media marketing experience
- Motivated, with ability to work under pressure
- CMS (Content Management System)
- Hold full, clean driving license, with access to own transport

To discuss these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: : David Osborne on 01304 222679

HR Assistant - Dover

Full Time - 37.5 hours p/w **Salary: £ 17,597 per annum**
Closing Date - 29 June 2017 **Interview Date – 05 July 2017**
Qualifications and Experience

- Maths and English GCSE A - C Grade or equivalent
- Previously worked in an HR environment
- Proficient in Microsoft Office e.g. Word/Excel/Outlook
- Attention to Detail
- Awareness and understanding of the importance of confidentiality within the HR Department, demonstrating discretion at all times

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Lorna Dopazo, HR Advisor on 01304 222684

For job descriptions and application forms please visit our website: www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Sarah Blaber, HR Assistant Telephone: 01304 222690
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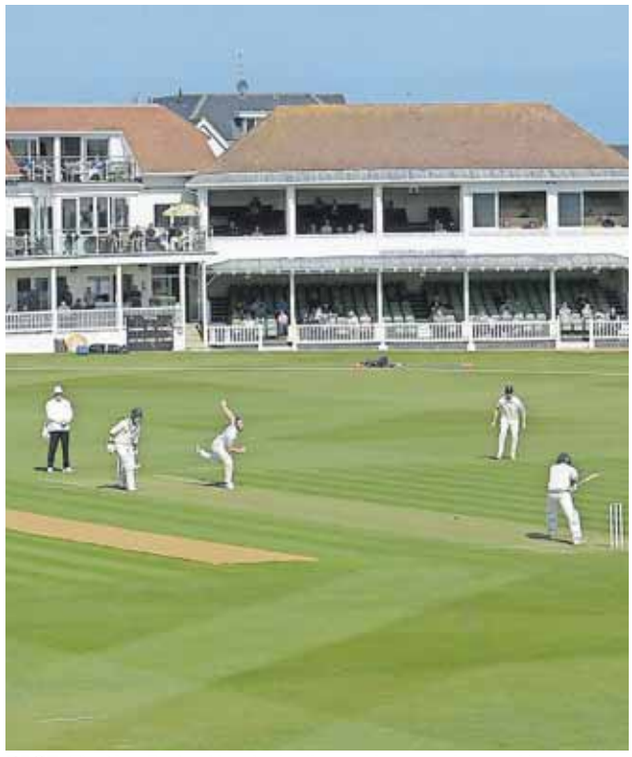
Milne: I'm set to entertain you all

Fast bowler all set to add real bite to Spitfires' T20 campaign

Cricket

By Mark Pennell
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



PACE: The New Zealand bowler is all geared up to make a real impression in front of the crowds this summer Pictures: ADY KERRY

A LITTLE like the pure-bred sprinters on show at Royal Ascot this week, fast bowlers occasionally need to be wrapped in cotton wool and only released off the rein for full gallop on the big occasions – Kent's new overseas firebrand, Adam Milne, is one such thoroughbred.

Signed principally for this season's six-week, 14-match block of NatWest T20 Blast matches, the all-rounder from Palmerston North, New Zealand, clearly represents something of a risk worth taking as far as the Spitfires are concerned because the 25-year-old's playing records reveal something of an open secret, in that his long-term injury record is far from great.

Since making his maiden first-class appearance in March 2010 Milne has played only 17 more red-ball matches. Yet, over the same period, he has won 55 caps for New Zealand in ODIs and T20Is and played 123 List A and T20 matches for Central Districts, New Zealand A and the IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore.

He has suffered heel issues, picked up a hamstring tear and side strain and undergone surgery to an elbow injury in the past 18 months.

Yet, give him rest and recuperation and save him for the big day, then Milne can produce devastating, match-winning spells and the occasional delivery clocked at speeds in excess of 95mph.

Arriving at the Spitfire Ground, he said: "It's a wonderful cricket ground and I'm looking forward to playing here in the T20s with a few thousand people in the house. I guess if the punters like fast bowling and will be entertained by someone who can get it through at a reasonably fast click, then that's what I hope to offer. And hopefully plenty of wickets."

According to Matt Walker, Kent's head coach, Milne could even be considered for a Specsavers County Championship debut ahead of Kent's four-day, day/night clash with Nottinghamshire starting at Trent Bridge on Monday afternoon. He said: "Adam's had a rest for a couple of weeks but Trent Bridge will present an opportunity to maybe take both our overseas players in Yasir Shah and Adam, look at the conditions and then make a choice."

Cody quits Gills as Eaves signs on dotted line

Football

THE revolving door at Gillingham saw one popular strike out and another come in, as Ady Pennock prepares his squad ahead of the new League One campaign.

Cody McDonald, who scored a dozen goals for the Gills last season, has left on a free transfer and joined fellow League One outfit AFC Wimbledon.

Dons boss Neal Ardley said: "It was a long chase over the summer and I did try to sign Cody two years back, just before he re-signed for Gills.

"He has only just turned 31 and he still has years ahead of him. He scored 12 goals last season for Gillingham in a team that struggled a bit and his goalscoring record previously has been very good."

OUT: McDonald signs for the Dons

The striker added: "At this stage in my career it was something I could not really turn down."

Meanwhile, as his parking spot at Priestfield came free, it was filled by Tom Eaves - the 6ft 5in former Bolton and Yeovil striker.

During the 2016/17 season Eaves made 48 appearances and scored seven goals, the last of which coming against Crawley in a 5-0 home win last December.

On signing the forward the Gills boss said: "It's great to have got Tom on board; he's strong, he's quick and his height is naturally going to be an asset."

Eaves added: "I'm really looking forward to getting going. I can't wait. I really like the manager, I've spoken to Peter Taylor too and I think I can contribute in bringing some physicality to the team."

Sport Shorts

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editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Worcestershire serve up first defeat for Kent

KENT suffered the first taste of defeat in the County Championship this week after Daryl Mitchell and Joe Clarke powered Worcestershire to the victory that lifts them into the Specsavers County Championship Division Two promotion places.

Mitchell scored his fourth century in the last five Championship matches as Worcestershire galloped to their 399 target and achieved the third highest most successful chase in their history with 19.1 overs to spare. They won by four wickets at New Road.

He was given excellent support by Moeen Ali and then Clarke who in this game recaptured his form with a vengeance in scoring two centuries in a Championship match for the first time in his blossoming career.

It pushed Kent down into third in the league table going into the weekend and out of the promotion places. The county side next face Nottinghamshire - who are leading the table - at Trent Bridge.

The game beings on Monday.

BLOW: Next up are Notts

FAST: And visitors can experience life on the track too during the event

Mod cars take to the track at Brands Hatch

THOUSANDS of race fans are set to flock to Brands Hatch today (Sunday) for Tunerfest South showcases the UK's hottest performance cars on the legendary track.

Headline event will be the Time Attack Championship which pits highly-modified cars battling it out for the fastest times around the Indy circuit.

Also on track will be demonstrations from drift cars and the SuperPro Gymkhana Challenge. Visitors will also be able to take their own cars on track, with public track time sessions available to book.

There will be passenger experiences at the event too, and these include rides in the Brands Hatch RallyMaster Toyota GT86 cars. Off-track entertainment includes a huge range of car displays.

Gills secure plum League Cup tie

GILLINGHAM will kick off their League One campaign with a trip to Doncaster on August 5, after the fixture list was revealed earlier this week.

Ady Pennock's team will then stay on the road where they will come face to face with Championship high flyers Reading after they were drawn together in the Carabao Cup - the new name for the League Cup - first round on August 8.

Pennock said: "It's a fantastic tie for us and we know they will present tough opposition, however we will go there with no fear and do our best to book our place in the next round."

The first home game will be a league fixture against Bradford City on August 12.

Other big games to look out for include an early home fixture against rivals Charlton Athletic at Priestfield on Setember 6, with the return tie at the Valley on New Year's Day.

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